

India Now

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Monthly News Publication of Indian People's
Association in North America (IPANA)

This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

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INDIA NOW

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Situation in Punjab Worsens

Extremists on the Rampage as Gandhi Govt. and Akali Leaders Watch

KISHAN BAJWA

The situation in Punjab once again took a worse turn soon after tripartite negotiations among the leaders of the Akali Dal, opposition leaders and the Indira Gandhi government had just started in New Delhi in March. This time, it was Deshmesh Regiment, a new group, which has been causing terror. Over 50 people have been killed over the last month, with railway stations set to fire in many cities. Punjab was declared a disturbed state. Curfew has been imposed once again in many parts of Punjab including Chandigarh. The presence of police and paramilitary forces have been increased with police getting more and more powers; a law was recently passed in the Lok Sabha allowing imprisonment without trial for up to 2 years in Punjab.

This is not the first time that communal tensions overtook Punjab when negotiations for settlement might seem to be making a headway. An editorial in News World said, "It seemed as though some powerful hand operating behind the screen planned for sabotaging the talks and the the extremist communal elements were just pawns in a well-played game." After calling off the negotiations, the Gandhi government's response has been the same as in Assam, namely to increase police repression.

EXTREMIST TERROR

First, it was Harbans Singh Manchanda, the President of the Delhi Gurudwara Management Committee and a close supporter of Indira Gandhi, who was the victim of Sikh extremists. The next was a BJP leader HL Khanna in Amritsar followed by a Congress(I) Rajya Sabha member and Professor of Punjabi, Dr. VN Tiwari at his home in Chandigarh. The Deshmesh Regiment claimed responsibility for these murders and also declared that they would kill one government official a day if the demands of the Sikhs are not met. A leader of the Hindu Sur-

akha Samiti in Chandigarh was also killed by Sikh extremists at his shop.

Deshmesh Regiment also claimed to have set fire to the railway stations. Over 150 people have been killed in recent violence perpetrated by Sikh extremists and the police over the past 3 months or so.

In connection with railway arson, the police arrested 160 students reportedly belonging to the banned All India Sikh Students Federation including extremist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's younger brother Jagjit Singh.

Apart from these incidents, Sikh extremists have also been creating panic and terror by attacking public functions, meetings and places. More innocent people have been killed. Following Khanna's murder in Amritsar, BJP and other parties called for a general strike. Police fired at

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Threat to Farooq Government Increases

R.N.Raju

Major changes among the state governments was carried out by the Gandhi government in a sudden move that is being interpreted as reflecting a decision by Cong(I) to increase its control over states, particularly those ruled by non-Congress(I) parties. The most prominent of the recent changes involve the promotion and the posting of Lt. Governor Jagmohan of Delhi as the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Political observers comment that the incumbent Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, B.K. Nehru had been unwilling to go along with the center in its proposed intervention in the state. Nehru has been shifted to Gujarat, K.M. Chandy has been moved from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh, former Union Minister Bishma Narain Singh has been made Governor of Assam and Meghalaya and former Maharashtra chief secretary P.G. Gavai has been made Delhi Lt. Governor.

The convention of consulting the state chief ministers about the acceptability of the center's appointees has been

completely given up by the Gandhi government, consistent with its general policies of eliminating all reasonable democratic norms in the country's political life. Farooq Abdullah told the state assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, that he was just informed of the appointment over phone by Union Home Minister P.C. Sethi. Concerning the appointee, he said "we should not create any mistrust for we have to work with him."

As Lt. Governor of Delhi Jagmohan earned considerable notoriety during the Emergency rule of Indira Gandhi. His active commitment to serve Gandhi's interests using all means is well-recognized. His presence in Jammu and Kashmir can only assure the center that it will have an active proponent for central intervention in the state, if and when the center desires it. Among the other appointees, Bishma Narain Singh is known for his loyalty to Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. The new Lt. Governor of Delhi, Gavai was until recently an advisor to the Punjab Governor.

Dock Workers Strike Concluded

The strike by over 300,000 dock workers ended on April 10 with an agreement between the central government and the dock workers union leaders on wage increase. The strike lasted for 26 days. According to the new agreement, the minimum wage for a dock worker increased from Rs 325 a month to Rs 550 a month, whereas the top wage went up from Rs 1300 to Rs 1680. The workers were demanding a 40% increase in the wages to be in parity with other public service workers but they finally settled at approximately 21%. It is estimated that there was a loss of Rs 20 billion to the economy because of the strike. The strike shut down 10 major ports with over 180 ships stranded offshores.

Earlier 13 opposition politicians in Orissa accused police of killing over 100 people after a clash at Paradip port (see an accompanying story). They told a news conference that the police were responsible for the deaths of more than 100 people and the burning of about 3,000 dock workers huts at Paradip port. According to the leaders of the strike, workers who were picketing, clashed on March 19 when stevedores tried to break the strike by taking 1,000 casual workers into the docks under police escort. The leaders added that following the incident the police ransacked the place. The strike leaders reportedly toured the affected area and they were told by the local people that large numbers of bodies had been burned or thrown into the sea. These assemblymen have asked the governor for a judicial inquiry into the incident.



Militant youths stop traffic in Panipat

FROM INDIA TODAY

Amnesty International's 1983 Report on India

[Amnesty International submitted its annual report on Human Rights situation in India to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 28 December 1983. Excerpts from the report entitled "Review of Amnesty International's Main Human Rights Concerns in India during 1983" are reproduced below. The report is concerned in the main with preventive detention, torture and deaths in police custody, and "encounter" killings. Excerpts from the first two parts are being printed this month. "Encounter" killings will be covered next month.]

1. PREVENTIVE DETENTION

"In India, the most important preventive detention laws are the 1980 National Security Act and the 1981 Essential Services Maintenance Act.

"The National Security Act, in Section 3(2), allows the Central or State government to order a person to be detained without trial for the purpose of 'preventing him acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State ... the maintenance of Public Order ... or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community....' Its provisions are widely used in India, especially in the states of Punjab and Assam at times

of civil disturbances. On 11 March, 1983 the Union Home Minister PC Sethi is reported to have directed senior police to fully utilize the National Security Act while dealing with activities which ... threaten the security of society.

"Amnesty International is well aware that, at the time the National Security Act came into force, the government gave assurances it would not be used to curb forms of peaceful political dissent. The government then was quoting as saying 'The government needs these powers to get blackmarketeers and smugglers. There is no question of its using the NSA to curb political dissent or trade union action.' (Indian Express, 6 March, 1981). Despite these assurances, however, Amnesty International has received reports that hundreds of people in non-violent opposition to the government as well as members of trade unions have been held under its provisions since its promulgation and during 1983. In 1983, for example, reports have been received regarding the detention of student leaders in Assam in January and September, trade union leaders in Bombay during January and, in recent months, a number of people allegedly involved in agitation for greater autonomy in Punjab...

"The Home Minister [is] considering making the powers under the NSA more stringent by removing the supervisory powers of the courts over the use of the Act. According to a report of the Indian Express of 27 November 1983 'an official level meeting in the Home Ministry' had reviewed the recent releases ordered by the Courts of the two NSA detainees and 'A suggestion had emerged at the meeting that changes could be made in the NSA to make the matter out of the courts' jurisdiction.'

"Amnesty International has urged successive Indian governments to repeal preventive detention laws in India altogether because preventive detention practices bypass the ordinary process of criminal law and the safeguards therein provided designed to prevent arbitrary arrest and detention...

"On these grounds, Amnesty International reiterates its appeal to the Indian government to repeal laws providing for preventive detention in India, including the National Security Act, the Essential Services Maintenance Act of 1981 and the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act...

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Kothari, Sheth, Nandy and Raj Krishna Discuss

Can Democracy Survive in the Republic?

[On the occasion of the Republic Day, Hiranmay Karlekar of the Indian Express discussed the prospects for democracy and authoritarianism with Dr Raj Krishna of the Delhi School of Economics and Dr Rajni Kothari, Dr D.L.Sheth and Dr Ashis Nandy of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Following are some of the comments.]

DANGER ON THE HORIZON

Rajni Kothari: I think that the process of democratization that we have generated as a result of both adult franchise and the adoption of certain institutions, as well as the role of the Congress party in bringing the lower and middle classes into the system, has created a process of mass awakening and transformation. So, in the long run, the democratic political process will, I am sure, take roots.

But it is also a fact that the kind of development that we have pursued, both in terms of economic strategies and in terms of the governmental sector and the bureaucracy, and the kind of role that we have assigned to the State in our transformation, has given rise to fairly large (in absolute numbers) vested interests which today stand in the way of the democratic process.

What is happening is that as people become more enlightened and ask for their rights — which I think was implicit in the democratic model that we adopted — they are being crushed. There is increasing repression both by the upper classes and the upper castes in the rural areas, as well as in the peripheral urban areas — by the police, paramilitary forces, the mafia groups that run our political parties and all the elements that have been let loose as a result of the rise of the people and their demands for the exercise of their rights.

So I would say that in the immediate future, the democratic process is going to come under a serious shadow and much will depend on how we perform economically. By this I do not only mean growth, but whether our elite is able to allow the benefits of development to be widely distributed. I have serious doubts that this will happen. It seems to me that the repressive forces will take over and before long even the formal democratic rights that we are enjoying will come increasingly under threat.

STRAINS FROM ECONOMY

Raj Krishna: I think there are two major economic trends that can cause a tremendous strain on the democratic process in the coming years. First, there is a very low rate of growth — low by international standards and in relation to our needs. This rate has allowed the per capita income to grow at about 1% a year, which is below the per capita rate of growth of some 70 countries.

Because of extreme demographic pressures, this low growth rate has not permitted either poverty or unemployment to diminish. In fact, the poverty ratio has never been less than 50%, the unemployment rate has never been less than 8%, and if you assume the stability of these ratios, we get frightening projections about the amount of poverty and unemployment over the next 20 years.

Although this intolerable level of poverty may not lead necessarily to an organized revolution, it can certainly lead to large scale dispersed violence as an expression of anger. And that widespread violence can easily provide an excuse to the Establishment, which is unable to reduce poverty, to treat it purely as a law-and-order problem and to argue that the problem should be handled by centralized and more brutal repression.

WHO SUPPORTS AUTHORITARIANISM?

Ashis Nandy: I think a very large section of Indian society has developed a vested interest in the present limits on the spirit of democratic rights. The rich, some sections of the middle class and professionals — journalists, academics, scientists, technologists — have begun to enjoy the benefits of a system which says that democracy should go this far and no further.

On the other hand, for the first time, I notice a new confidence in the legitimacy for a democratic process in India, even amongst those who were previously convinced that any talk of democracy was an expression of some kind of what you might call bourgeois liberalism.

So the people have begun to see democracy as a possible path to better distributive justice and to a greater access to State power for the weakest in society. This of course also means that whereas at the top of society, faith and confidence in the democratic process have declined, at the bottom of society, faith and confidence in the democratic process have increased and the expectations have also increased. It depends on whether you are looking at society from the top or from the bottom that will provide an answer to the question.

Kothari: We are experiencing a fascinating attitude to politics in our country. At the bottom, at the level of the people — especially the poor — politics is THE major instrument of contribution, no matter how oppressed or depressed they are. All indicators suggest that the poor have a stake in the system. The system may have lost credibility among the intellectuals and among people like us, but not among the poor.

The poor talk to opposition leaders, they talk to grassroots workers, they talk to each other, and they have a tremendous faith in the political process, because that is their only instrument — the vote is a major instrument that a poor person has to transform his life.

On the other hand, at the higher levels, one would have expected — given the educational standard, given the supposedly enlightened perspectives — a greater democratic orientation. This is what democratic theory tells us — that the more educated a person, the more democratic he will be, but it is the opposite.

What is happening in fact is a process of depoliticization, a process by which politics is being given a dirty name. Politics has been deliberately undervalued. There is an effort to numb the senses of citizens by giving them more and more entertainment. More and more cricket matches are being fully televised. The number of films shown has gone up. We are promoting color television and video. All this is an effort to numb the political senses.

Apart from the fact that the intermediate institutions of party and voluntary groups have been destroyed, there is a definite attempt to discredit politics and put in its place a baby bureaucratic-technocratic rule, at the middle of which will be the new dynasty that everyone is talking about.

So what is very interesting is a reversal of attitude to politics between the masses, on the one hand, and the elite on the other. The elite wants less and less of politics. I am not talking of politicians only. Talk to any middle class businessman, any middle class professional; they all want a bureaucratic-technocratic rule — hand power over to the people of merit, so-called merit and efficiency, and we will usher in a golden age.

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A Plea to the Silent Majority: Save Punjab

PREM KUMAR

For over two years now, the state of Punjab has been struck by the fires of violence, communalism, and hatred. The flames are constantly fanned by certain self-appointed leaders whose irresponsible rhetoric is taken as the gospel by the masses — the simple rural folk as well as the educated people both in India and abroad. Innocent lives have been sacrificed at the altar of blind faith that the people of Punjab continue to show in their leaders whose myopic vision matches only their limited intellect. The air is contaminated by vicious slogans giving vent to latent racism and bigotry disguised as religious and nationalist sentiment. The common man is witnessing this daily nightmare silently and helplessly. The gradual erosion of love, friendship, trust and respect for each other is threatening to revive an ugly chapter in India's not too distant history. Once a land of peace and prosperity, Punjab has now become "a happy hunting ground for militants, maniacs and murderers," as BJP general secretary, L.K.Advani, recently summarized the situation in the state.

Who are the originators or perpetrators of this tragic situation, I do not know. It is easy to point the accusing finger at an individual, a particular party, or the government. But such tactics are best left to politicians and their mindless followers. The pertinent question now is not who started the fire but rather who is trying to put it out. The painfully obvious answer: none. The ruling party's inability to solve the problem cannot be defended; the opposition has been concerned mainly with reaping political gains out of this troubled land. The few isolated and collective efforts of concerned individuals — both Punjabi and non-Punjabi — have remained ineffective. So the horror goes on. The loss of lives and property has already made a serious dent in social life and national economy. Yet far more significant that this is the damage done to the psyche and spirit of the people undergoing this trauma.

When "political" solutions to the "problems" obviously created by self-promoting politicians are found and accepted, when the burned-down buildings are rebuilt and the charred buses are replaced, when the wounds start to heal, something will remain beyond recovery. The innocent lives lost in the process will never be recovered. And the pity is the Punjabis should know this more than perhaps anybody else in India.

How can they close their eyes to the scars left by the partition of the country in 1947? Must the people of Punjab who lived and died together in their countless struggles against the invaders and oppressors now fight each other to assert their individuality? The Hindus and the Sikhs spilled their blood and sweat together in their soil; together they made history. Now a bunch of self-serving overzealous leaders wish to rewrite the history to sanctify their own narrow-mindedness and bigotry. Will they succeed? That is up to the people of Punjab to decide. But let us not play into the hands of such opportunists the way one of Shakespeare's characters felt of humans manipulated by their gods: "As flies to wanton boys, so are we to gods; they kill us for their sport." Living in the luxury and safety of their ivory towers, our demigods have amused themselves long with such sports. But they are insatiable; let them find some other sport now.

In a democratic set-up, minorities historically have had grievances against the majority. There are various means

that individuals or groups have tried from time to time to redress the problems. Yet the validity of means to achieve an end cannot be ignored regardless of how noble the end is. I do not suggest that those who believe their rights have been violated should not fight for them. But the means to achieve their ends must be clearly and ethically defined so that those who are prone to criminal and terrorist activities for their own reasons do not take advantage of the situation, thus obscuring the true purpose of the movement and tarnishing its image.

Evidently, the turmoil in Punjab has been alleged by several spokesmen of the movement to be the consequence of the government's repression of Sikhs as a minority. That the Sikhs are a minority in India is a fact that no demographer can reverse. But are they really "repressed and downtrodden"? One need not look for an answer from the proponents of this notion but from the rest of India and perhaps Indians abroad. One wonders why this notion is shared by so few, if any, in the world press and media.

Yet repression of minorities in India is not a myth but a reality. Leaving the issues of Sikhs as a repressed minority to other better-informed sources, let me point out who really is repressed in India. First of all, the poor — teeming millions who lack the existential necessities of life, who have no political identity, and who have no control over their own lives — are repressed. Then there are the so-called scheduled castes, backward classes, and tribal groups. They are the repressed ones because while living in a democracy their basic human rights exist only on paper. Moreover, in a society where women are still regarded as personal property to be retained or disposed of as is convenient for their male masters, there is repression. Yes, women are downtrodden (and they are not even a minority) not only by men but by obsolete social customs, economic systems and cultural traditions as well. Thus, repression and discrimination in India thrive on unfair economic conditions and social injustice (for which we as individuals are as much responsible as the government for failing to safeguard basic human rights and human dignity) more than racial and ethnic considerations.

My concern for what is happening in Punjab and the consequences of what has already happened is not that of an apologist for an adherent of a particular political or sectarian ideology. It is the concern of an individual who was born and raised in Punjab and who shares the pride all Punjabis have in their state and their nation. The Punjabis never tire of glorifying Punjab in their folksongs, dances and legends. But their songs are going to sound pretty hollow if the disintegration of the people continues to corrode the remarkable cultural enrichment sustained by this great land's plurality and diversity.

It is time for the silent majority to stop being mere spectators of a catastrophe and raise their voices against communalism, fanaticism, terrorism and disintegration. It is time to stop further destruction of life and property in India, to heal the wounds — physical, emotional and psychological — of the sufferers, to work toward peace and harmony, to rise above self-interest and self-aggrandisement, and to learn from our own history and our heritage. Perhaps we can restore some of the wonder that was India.



"We've tried, and tried — and he still shows no improvement.. obviously the fault lies in him."

Beyond the Textile Strike

Bharat Patankar

The Bombay textile strike is hardly over. It continues still in villages in a new and significant form uniting industrial workers and the rural poor.

Khanapur is one of the 87 taluks which are perennially scarcity-ridden for years. These areas always remain under the umbrella of clouds which rarely rain. Most of the textile workers (80%), who come from western Maharashtra, are from the taluks which are dry. It is the same part of the state which is called most developed and having undergone the green revolution! Half of the taluks from five districts of western Maharashtra have the least possible greenery. It is interesting to note that because of historical, cultural and political reasons and currently because of highly developed co-operative agro-industrial network (sugar, milk, etc.) all the main political bosses of the ruling party and opposition bourgeois parties come from this part.

In April last year, textile workers belonging to Khanapur taluk took up problems faced by toiling peasants. A march to the Tehsil office demanded, along with an honorable settlement of the textile workers' strike, a solution of the drinking water problem of many villages and stoppage of fraud in the measurement of Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) work. This unexpected incident angered as well as confused the taluk authorities and local political bosses. After discussion that went on for 3 hours and exposed the technical bosses in front of the masses, the marchers returned victorious at least in relation to the 'village demands'.

A second march by EGS laborers with textile workers went to the district collector's office on June 8. It was the first of its kind after many years, at Sangli, the district place and home town of the Chief Minister, Vasant Dada Patil. It took place against the background of the Assembly election being fought by Vasant Dada in this constituency against a textile workers' candidate.

On October 28, 1983, 3000 EGS laborers (basically agricultural laborers) gathered at Vita, the taluka place, and with the participation of textile workers from Bombay founded a movement. They named it Shoshit Shetkari, Kashtakari, Kamgar Mukti Sangharsh. It was to be a platform open to all those who want to participate in ongoing struggles of indus-

trial workers and rural poor. This spirit was symbolized by its second name, Kranti Singh Mukta Vyaspath (Revolutionary Lion's Free Platform). Thus, without any indirect mediation, the working class started taking steps towards having an alliance with the rural poor. The area was stirred by the street play group of workers from Bombay, Samagra Sadak Natak Chalwal.

The struggle is developing in a two-fold manner, against rural rich landowners and against the Government. But EGS work though of immediate help, is posing a danger. The main type of work under the scheme is road construction! This is in spite of the fact that the Government since 1972 had decided to take up schemes which would abolish the drought situation. 'Road building' is going on in all the 87 taluks where EGS work becomes necessary every year. This policy does nothing but continue the uneven development in the State - as elsewhere in India. On January 26 all industrial workers from the taluk in Bombay organized a conference on this issue in Bombay. They decided to launch struggles in the city itself, this time not for their sectional demands but for those related to the rural poor. This is something new for the workers so far organized in trade unions for their

sectional demands. Back in 1956, Bombay textile workers in some districts had stood for implementation of the Tenancy Act. But after that the majority of them were considered by the village poor as a 'well off' class cut off from the real problems in their villages. Through the process of new struggles this is changing. Industrial workers had two kinds of relationship with rural society. One with their families, their wives and children, etc., staying in on whatever small plot of land they have. The second relation was of giving donations to the village for temple or school building and some other village facilities. The latter took place in close friendship and patronage of village bosses. This is now changing into one of comradeship with the rural poor in struggle which is inevitably against village bosses. This combined struggle demands basic changes in the villages.

from Frontier

Andhra Paper Is Center of Legislature-Court Dispute

R.N.Raju

The Andhra state legislative council and the Supreme Court appear to be locked in a dispute arising from their respective views on actions involving the Telugu daily Eenadu. In fact the dispute is merely one more attempt by Congress(I), which was handed a humiliating electoral defeat in the state, to cause irritation and provide obstruction to the Telugu Desam government. The dispute arises from the Supreme Court directive that the editor of the Telugu daily Ramoji Rao should not be arrested in pursuance of any warrant issued by the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council.

The Committee of Privileges of the Council held Ramoji Rao "guilty of gross breach of privilege and contempt of the House." The action followed an article published in the daily on March 10, 1983 relating to the proceedings of the House the previous day. The Council Chairman issued a directive to the Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad to arrest and bring Ramoji Rao to the bar of the Council. He also directed that the Supreme Court notice be ignored. Meanwhile, the Court ordered that the Commissioner of Police "shall not arrest" the editor. The state Chief Minister N.T.Rama Rao unsuccessfully pleaded to the Council that the issue be deferred till the Supreme Court decided the case. He also appealed to the President to refer the issue to the Court for advisory opinion. However, the Council rejected Rama Rao's appeals and passed a resolution asking the President to ignore the Chief Minister's request to him. The entire issue on which the Council spent a number of days arose from an article in the daily Eenadu describing the Council session on March 9, 1983 with the caption of confusion or disorder among the elders. Council members belonging to BJP and Cong(I) took this title as meaning that the Council members are creating trouble mischievously. Further, since the Council is dominated by Cong(I), and the Telugu Desam government has been seeking its abolition, an article in the daily which supports the Telugu Desam party served as an effective focus for the existing conflict. Even though Ramoji Rao wrote to the Privileges Committee of the Council saying that the article did not have any malice or ridicule attributed to it, the apology was not accepted by the committee. To consider this issue, the Privileges Committee had seven sittings. And to deal with the Supreme Court's intervention protecting the Eenadu editor, the issue was being made into one of conflict

involving interrelations among the legislature, judiciary and the executive. For the time being the issue has been put aside by the action of chief minister Rama Rao who advised the state governor to prorogue the Council "because there was no business before it."

For any observer of the political scene in India these actions of a state legislature will not come as a surprise. The Gandhi government has been refusing to give the presidential assent to the resolution of the Andhra Pradesh assembly abolishing the state Council. While there is no legal basis to support its actions, the center has been persisting in its intransigent role as it finds no other way to have a presence in the state. It is using the Cong(I) majority in the Council obtained prior to its most humiliating defeat by the Telugu Desam party to stall and obstruct actions by the legislative assembly where it has little influence. While such political tactics adopted by the parties are not surprising, what is amusing about the situation is the attempt to make into a fundamental issue concerning the relative role of the legislature, judiciary and the executive in a democracy. That this should be attempted by Cong(I) which has trampled upon all norms of democracy makes the whole issue ludicrous. The Gandhi government has systematically been challenging the inherent strengths of the legislatures and of the judiciary and has initiated and implemented many a measure to undermine their functioning. It has sought to portray the judiciary as supreme when it was to its advantage, and has considered the legislature to be supreme when there was a change of advantage. But in all cases, the real dominance has been exercised not by the legislatures or the courts, but by the personal and family interests centered around the Prime Minister. Under circumstances when most of the legislators are supplicants for positions at the doors of Rajiv Gandhi, as was obvious during the recent elections, any talk of privileges by the power seekers only makes a mockery of democracy. The interrelation between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive is indeed an important issue to a functioning democracy. But in the particular context in which it has been raised by the Andhra Council, it ceases to have any just meaning.

SC: Why Police Camps In Schools and Churches In Andhra?

The Supreme Court issued notice to the Andhra Pradesh government on March 27 as well as to the Superintendent of Police of Warangal and others on a writ petition challenging the setting up of police camps in churches and educational institutions in Warangal district. A division bench comprising the Chief Justice YV Chandrachud, Justice DP Madon and Justice MP Thakkar directed the authorities to file a reply within two weeks.

The petition was moved by the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee and the People's Union for Democratic Rights which sought directions to declare police camps in Warangal illegal and asked for their removal. The civil liberties organizations also pleaded for the appointment of a commission of inquiry to ascertain the extent of violation of democratic rights of people by the establishment of such camps. The petition is claimed to be representing over a million rural people and 22,000 students in Warangal district. According to the petition, there are over 100 armed police camps in the districts of Karimnagar, Warangal, Nizamabad, Adilabad, and Khammam.

Situation In Punjab Worsens

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violent crowds killing 10 people and injuring many more. General public is getting angry at the existing situation and the inaction of the government in detaining criminals and extremists. Following the murder of a leader of Hindu Suraksha Samiti in Chandigarh, the crowds held protest a march and went berserk.

DIFFERENT AKALI FACTIONS IN A BLOODY FEUD

In other development, 4 people were killed in retaliation of the murder of a Bhindranwale's follower outside the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Bhindranwale's followers had charged that the Akali Dal was responsible for the killing of their supporter. Bhindranwale's secretary said in a statement that the killing was the start of a campaign by the Akali Dal to execute Bhindranwale and his top followers because of growing support. They also announced the revenge. Few days later, 4 bodies of people alleged to be involved in the murder of Bhindranwale's follower were found at nearby places.

Another murder took place within the premises of the Golden Temple; a person was reportedly beaten to death.

OPPOSITION DEMANDS RESIGNATION OF GANDHI GOVT

Earlier, the Gandhi government had offered to amend Article 25 of the constitution which the Akali Dal had been protesting. According to Akali leaders, the wording in the article did not reflect the distinct identity of the Sikh community; instead Sikhs, along with Jains and Buddhists, were grouped to be part of Hindu religion. Akali Dal President Harchand Singh Longowal had welcomed the move and called off the agitation. However, Union Home Minister PC Sethi made a statement later in the parliament to the effect that the government had not agreed to amend the article but was willing to consider, which drew a great deal of criticism from the opposition including the Akali Dal because of wishy-washy attitude of the government.

As the situation worsened in Punjab, the opposition urged Gandhi to postpone her scheduled trip to African nations, which she refused. Instead, Gandhi shortened her trip by few days; she postponed her visit to Egypt and Algeria and decided to go to Libya and Tunisia to discuss the Palestinian problem and crisis in Lebanon.

Gandhi's Resignation Demanded

Members of the opposition parties including BJP president Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lok Dal President Charan Singh took a procession towards the parliament on April 13, the Baisakhi day, demanding an early settlement of the Punjab problem and the resignation of the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government for its inability to handle the crises in Punjab and Assam.

Gandhi and her government have once again started singing the old and familiar tune of blaming a big power (an indirect reference to CIA and US) for the tense situation in Punjab. Many members of the ruling party including Union Home Minister PC Sethi have once again accused Pakistani government for providing arms to the extremists and training them, a charge vehemently denied by Pakistan's President Zia-ul-Haq. Although Gandhi and her followers have intermittently been over the last 2 years saying that they have evidence to that effect, they have yet to make these facts public despite demands by the opposition and the press.

Foreign Debt up by 40% as Rupee Depreciates

India's foreign debt increased by over 40% due to appreciation of dollar's value and depreciation of Rupee with respect to dollar. Indian government owes over 20 billion dollars in US currency to the west.

Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee recently agreed in the Lok Sabha that the steady depreciation in the value of the rupee vis-a-vis the US dollar had indeed raised by about 40% the value of India's external debt which had to be paid in American currency. According to Mukherjee, the exchange rate for dollar has increased from Rs 7.94 on Jan. 10, 1980 to Rs 7.965 on the same date in 1981, but it jumped to Rs 9.1 in 1982, Rs 9.72 in 1983 and Rs 10.66 in 1984. The Rupee has thus effectively devalued by 40%. The linking of Rupee to a basket of currencies, as is the case now, thus results in silent devaluation, avoiding the

political embarrassment that might result if the Rupee had to be explicitly devalued as was the case in 1966.

The total amount of India's external debt that had to be repaid in US dollars stood at 11.1 billion dollars on Dec 31, 1983. This did not include the outstanding IBRD loans of about 1.193 billion dollars which is a repayable in a mix of currencies.

In reply to another question, Mukherjee said the India's total foreign loans on government account was Rs 190 billion. On these accounts, the government paid interest of Rs 2.5 billion in 1980-81, Rs 2.76 billion in 1981-82, and Rs 3.2 billion in 1982-83. These figures led many opposition members to charge that Congress(I) government was taking India towards bankruptcy by taking such large loans and then misusing them.

Export Import Policy Further Liberalized

The Indian government announced a further liberalization of its new import-export policy on April 12. Among other things, the new policy would allow small industries to import new technology under open general license. The new policy brings 149 items, including 94 in the capital goods area, under the open license plan. It removes another 54 from the list. The new policy unlike the previous policies, has no banned lists. However, the government has indicated that it will put items judged inessential for technology import on a list of restricted imports. Another change is that the import licenses will be valid now for 18 months instead of 12 months. A new category has been introduced to cover entrepreneur-merchant-exporters operating from less known areas who according to government sources, have done very well by promoting exports to Gulf countries.

Slump in Indo-Soviet Trade

According to the statistics reported by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade, India-Soviet Trade dropped from Rs 25 billion in 1982 to Rs 23 billion in 1983, a drop of 9%. India increased its imports from Rs 10 billion to Rs 12 billion, but Soviet imports fell from Rs 15 billion to Rs 11 billion.

According to First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, G. Zhuravlev, the volume of trade during 1984 is expected to exceed the 1983 figure by 25%. The Soviet Minister reiterated his country's policy on expanding trade with newly independent countries based on the Soviet principle of mutually beneficial division of labor.

A 9-member Soviet delegation led by another Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, MG Osipov, arrived in New Delhi on April 18 for discussions for ways to increase Indian imports from the Soviet Union to reduce Russia's trade deficit with India. The delegation includes senior officials from Soviet foreign trade organizations, central ministries and GOSPLAN, the Soviet apex economic planning committee.

Poverty In Orissa

With a per capita income about 30% lower than the national average, Orissa ranks with Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and UP in terms of the proportion of population below the poverty line. About 90% of its present population of about 27.5 million live in villages and depend primarily on agriculture. But since less than 20% of the gross cropped area of the State has assured irrigation, yields of its major crop, rice, are among the lowest in India. The State had originally aimed to create during the Sixth Plan, an additional irrigation potential of one million hectares which was almost equal to the total potential available under major and medium irrigation schemes at the beginning of the Plan. But because only Rs 3.6 billion were allocated for these schemes against Rs 8 billion originally proposed by the State, not more than half the target is likely to be achieved. So although some limited progress has been made towards achieving the Sixth Plan production targets of 1.4 million tons for oilseeds and 1.3 million tons for pulses, total foodgrain production in 1982-83 was only 4.5 million tons against the Sixth Plan target of 7.5 million tons. This year, because the rain gods have been merciful, foodgrain production may reach 5.5 million tons. Even so, rice yields at 12.5 quintals, a hectare will be no more than 2/5 of those in Punjab, with average yields on lands under the high-yielding varieties being only 19 quintals a hectare.

Food Grain Production Likely to Set a New Record

India may have a record food grain production, thanks to good rains. The grain production is likely to reach a new peak of over 149 million tons during 1983-84. This will include a record kharif crop of 88 million tons.

Rice production is estimated at 59 million tons, coarse cereals 33 million tons and wheat production 44 million tons.

Public Sector Profits

Public enterprises made a record post-tax profit of Rs 6.17 billion during 1982-83 compared to Rs 4.45 billion in 1981-82. The value of goods produced and services rendered also rose to Rs 51.56 billion. According to the Public Sector Survey for 1982-83 presented to Parliament, the % of gross profits to capital employed also improved to 13.05.

The year also recorded expansion in public sector investment, improvement in turnover and increase in the generation of internal resources, export earnings and employment opportunities.

Investment in the public sector has grown appreciably over the years. From Rs 248.16 billion as on March 31, 1982, in 205 enterprises, it has increased to Rs 303.39 billion as on March 31, 1983, in 209 enterprises. The top 10 enterprises in terms of investment in the form of equity and loan as on March 31, 1983 are: Steel Authority of India, Coal India, Oil and Natural Gas Commission, National Thermal Power Corporation, Rural Electrification Corporation, Fertilizer Corporation, Shipping Corporation of India, and Food Corporation of India. In 1982-83 they showed an improvement in export earnings by reaching a level of Rs 46.93 billion from 27.55 billion during the preceding year, a percentage increase of 70.32.

In absolute terms, profit before tax increased by Rs 8.15 billion from Rs 26.54 billion in 1981-82 to Rs 34.69 billion in 1982-83. This was the second consecutive year characterized by all-round improvement on various fronts of financial performance of public enterprises.

The capacity utilization also went up and 90 units recorded utilization of more than 75%, 43 units between 50 to 75% but 31 units had less than 50%.

The public enterprises contributed to Rs 55.29 billion in 1982-83 towards dividend, corporate taxes, excise duty and customs and other duties compared to Rs 45.67 billion during 1981-82. Thus the total direct inflow from the public enterprises to the Exchequer increased by more than 21% in 1982-83 over 1981-82.

Employment of the public enterprises stood at 2.09 million during 1982-83 against 2.02 million in 1981-82. The average emoluments of the employees have also increased.

The export earnings showed an impressive increase reaching a level of Rs 46.93 billion in 1982-83 from Rs 27.55 billion during the preceding year.

Recognizing the contribution made by the public enterprises in the overall growth of the national economy, the survey stresses the need for further improvement in their performance. These enterprises are still saddled with huge inventories which on March 31, 1983, were of the order of Rs 102.86 billion, when the total output was Rs 374.02 billion. However, the inventory level has come down to 101 days compared to 105 days in 1982.

The main 10 profit making enterprises are Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) with a pre-tax profit of Rs 11.82 billion; Oil India Limited, Rs 2.05

billion; Indian Oil Corporation, Rs 1.5 billion; State Trading Corporation, Rs 620 million; Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, Rs 550 million; Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited, Rs 530 million; Indian Petro-Chemicals Corporation, Rs 500 million; Neyveli Lignite Corporation, Rs 470 million; Bharat Earth Movers, Rs 420 million; and Central Coalfields, Rs 400 million.

At the same time the profits of several enterprises have declined. The profit of STC has declined by Rs 87.9 million; MMTC by Rs 64.4 million; Indian Petro-Chemicals Corporation by Rs 46.5 million; Central Coalfields Limited by Rs 760 million; National Fertilizers by Rs 250 million; Hindustan Petroleum Corporation by Rs 37.8 million; Western Coalfields by Rs 270 million; Cochin Refineries by Rs 80 million; Madras Refineries by Rs 56.8 million; India Tourism Development Corporation by Rs 11.2 million; Hotel Corporation of India by Rs 16.2 million; and Indian Roads Construction Corporation by Rs 19.4 million.

The top 10 loss incurring enterprises and their losses during 1982-83 are Steel Authority of India Rs 1.05 billion; Delhi Transport Corporation Rs 730 million; Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Rs 660 million; Indian Iron and Steel Company Rs 650 million; Fertilizer Corporation Rs 650 million; Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Rs 550 million; Eastern Coalfields Rs 550 million; Bharat Aluminium Company Rs 520 million; Heavy Engineering Corporation Rs 470 million; and Hindustan Copper Rs 290 million.

The companies which had earned profits during the previous year but have suffered losses in 1982-83 include Air India Charters, National Industries Development Corporation, HMT, Bearings Limited, Projects and Development India, Hindustan Paper Corporation and Cochin Shipyard Limited. The extent of difference in the profit in the case of Hindustan Zinc Limited is Rs 12 million; The Mogul Lines Rs 193.8 million; the Shipping Corporation Rs 34 million; Cotton Corporation of India Rs 297 million; and the Steel Authority of India Rs 1.45 billion.

The performance of public enterprises was adversely affected during the first quarter of the current year due to power cuts imposed by the State Electricity Boards of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. There was, however, improvement in the power supply position during the second quarter of the year. In the production of raw coal by Coal India, a loss of about 2.75 million tonnes was attributed to power shortages of which in the first quarter alone the loss was estimated as 1.7 million tonnes.

As regards production of steel, while in the first quarter, there was a production loss of 353,000 tonnes of saleable steel, much off this loss was contributed by adverse power supply position to the Rourkela Steel plant. However, the power supply position to SAIL plants had improved considerably during the second quarter.

India Accuses Western Nations of Exploitation

India on April 9 accused rich nations of exploiting the developing countries economically and warned them that unless the rich nations adopted a more far-sighted approach, a disaster of global proportions would follow.

In his address to a conference on Europe's role in the North-South dialogue held in Lisbon, Portugal, Indian External Affairs Minister PV Narasimha Rao said that the policies being followed by many developed countries including the US seemed to be guided by political exigencies. He added that there is a tendency to return to a parochial approach that occasionally borders on "economic chauvinism."

Speaking on behalf of the non-aligned movement, Rao urged the developed world to recognize the interdependence of nations and follow "enlightened long range global policies for the common good of humanity." Rao asserted that developing countries found themselves perpetually exploited and compelled to export their raw materials at prices over which they had no control. He added, "They are not even able to keep their body and soul together by their export earnings and were thus being pushed into balance of payments distress chronically and were able to get their development programs off the ground."

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Who Is a Feminist?

Dr NEERA DESAI

[Dr Neera Desai is the director of the SNT Women's University's Research Unit on Women's Studies.]

Some time back, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, while inaugurating a conference of women entrepreneurs, remarked that she was not a feminist — not at least of the Western mould. Similarly Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the veteran fighter for women's cause, while discussing the early women's movement in India, remarks, "Their movement, thus never became feminist, as universally understood, in its mental make-up. Women's problems were never sought to be treated on a sex basis but as social maladies of a common society to be cured by the efforts of all members of the society, men and women alike. This kept the women free from tension of sex contradiction and the violence of a sex war." These are not isolated expressions. In women's gatherings or participating in discussions on women's issues at academic seminars, it is not surprising to come across observations such as "I do not mean feminism of the west," "We are not men-haters," "Indian women's movement is different from Western feminism," "Western feminism does not suit Indian culture," and so on.

Not only in India, but in many third world countries there seems to be a prejudice against the word feminism. Kumari Jayawardane of Sri Lanka, while describing feminism and nationalism in the third world, mentions, "The word feminism itself has become an emotive word, evoking hostile reactions, although in Europe and elsewhere in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it was a word commonly used to signify agitation on issues concerning women."

What is feminism, and why is there a phobia against this term? According to Webster's dictionary, feminism means "(a) the principle that women should have political, economic and social rights equal to those of men, (b) the movement to win such rights for women." I think, taking the literal meaning, hardly any person working for the upliftment of women would resent the term. The crucial issue is why do we feel shy of using the term feminist or feminism? We are ready to use — women's question, emancipation/liberation of women, women's movement — but we do not like the term feminism or feminist movement. Is it because the initial contact of feminism in

the third world has been through the image projected by the media, suggesting that feminism is anti-men, is a craze of disillusioned middle class women in an affluent society, is against family, against marriage, is aggressive, etc? Is it because due to historical and other reasons men have at times, been initiators and also supporters of struggle against social oppression? Is it that in many middle class homes, it is because of the congenial atmosphere created by men that women are able to study, work or participate in outside activities? Is it likely that with more women getting educated, demanding jobs and asking for full participation, that men may be looked on as rivals or vice versa? Is it correct to say that Indian women's movement today is essentially a middle class movement?

In an analysis of the situation of discrimination, domestic violence, sexist bias in education, plight of widows, atrocities in the media, women leaders would be ardently describing how much women have to suffer at the hands of men and immediately apologetically adding a rider they would say, of course, I am not a feminist nor do I believe in feminism. It is high time we face facts. If feminism is meant as an awareness of women's oppression, exploitation, subordination within the family, workplace and in society and conscious action taken to redress this situation, then there should not be any objection to the word feminism. Men can also be collaborators in this struggle. It is however very true that when we are fighting against dowry death, the first target becomes the husband — men; when one talks of domestic violence or wife-beating, it is the husband again a man who is attacked; if we protest against media projection of women then the men writers, men directors, men producers have to be exposed, since they are in the positions of power and authority. This appears as anti-man, however it is not meant to be so. Even when one is exposing the system, the overt object of the dominance, in this case men, have to be exposed. This situation is likely to lead to a call for solidarity of women. The definition of feminism as freeing of women from men since men are the enemies and oppressors of women, as articulated by Radical Feminists, may not be acceptable but to reject feminism or feminist perspective, because of distortion, is to reject experience, to overlook history.

Women's Stall In Calcutta Book Fair

ARATI GANGULY

The Calcutta Book Fair is a much-awaited annual affair for the reading public in Calcutta and its surroundings. Hundreds of publishers wait for this occasion to present their publications directly to the people without media involvement. Books and magazines of different kinds are presented to the public and this way a general reaction is created, which gives the publication the push it needs.

The Women's Research Centre has always tried to take advantage of the nu-

sponded. We sat together and decided that the venture should be called Women Today (Aajker Nari). We could not do much regarding women writers, but veteran writers like Bani Roy, Jyotinmoyee Devi, Giri Bala Devi and Radharani Devi, who are at present ignored by status quo publishers, came forward.

Manushi and the reports of the SNT Women's Research Unit, together with the Women's Research Centre's three publications (Report on the condition of women workers of four cotton mills in



merous book fairs organized in the districts of West Bengal to advertise its magazine Shabala. We took a table at the Howrah Book Fair in 1983 and were able to build up a relationship with local women. In the Calcutta Book Fair 1983, we shared a table with other little magazines but to our dismay found that women rarely came forward themselves to look at the table. When they did take a step forward, it was hesitant, afraid that their male escort might get impatient. This year, we decided to make ourselves more obvious by bringing together women's organizations from India and abroad and also by contacting a few women writers. We sent out letters of invitation to almost all women's organizations and some re-

West Bengal, Working Women's World, and Shabala) provided the bulk of the material. Posters depicting women working in diverse fields were provided by the Liberal Association for Movement of People and the Joint Women's Program provided a poster portraying the problem of bride-burning. Shanu Lahiri's poster depicting the spirit of women's unity was also displayed.

The venture was a success. Women visitors entered the stall. We made a record sale, and by the end of the first week all copies of Manushi were sold out. Particularly popular were two booklets on Divorce Law and the Maintenance Law.



Young Tribal Women Lead Adivasis in Chhattisgarh

DOLORES CHEW

In and around the Badalkhol wildlife sanctuary of Raigarh district in Chhattisgarh, the Adivasis have been agitating for the closure of the sanctuary, which was established in 1975 and occupies 104 sq km.

Relentless landgrabbing has made these people alien in their homes. Many have migrated to Raipur and the industrial towns of Bhilai and Korba in Bihar, Orissa and UP. An official study reveals that in Chhattisgarh's Sarguja district alone, 25% of tribal holdings have been taken over by the state in the last ten years. Tribal women have had to suffer the added humiliation of being sexually abused by forest officials and contractors. Women have joined the agitation and remained in the forefront.

The Badalkhol movement is being led by a spirited young woman, Mariana Minj who belongs to Sihar Dand, one of the villages affected by the sanctuary. The regional press describes her somewhat fancifully as Mysterious Madam Mary. MP's Forest Minister Ajay Mushran called her a "paid unpatriotic woman" and declared that he would humble her very soon. The local politicians have been quick to see the presence of "foreign money" and "foreign hands" behind this struggle.

The demands of the tribals are: they should be given ownership rights; forests should not be nationalized; each forest village should be made into a self-contained unit; contractors should not be allowed to fell trees; and no foreign species of trees should be planted.

Montreal South Asians Celebrate Women's Day

This year, for the second year in a row, South Asians in Montreal celebrated the International Women's Day with a series of events. The activities were jointly undertaken by the women's organization, South Asia Community Centre, and the cultural association, Teesri Duniya. They spanned four days, over two consecutive week-ends.

Among the activities were screenings of feature films, Nikah in Hindi/Urdu and Streer Patra (Letter from a Wife) in Bengali, a daylong symposium and workshop session and a cultural evening.

While Nikah turned out to be disappointing, especially as subject matter relevant to Women's Day, Streer Patra, which played to a full house was a very apt film for the occasion. Based on a short story by Rabindranath Tagore, the film deals with the position of women in Bengali society at the turn of the century, when those belonging to affluent families had to look beautiful and do nothing productive. They were virtual prisoners to the wishes of the male members of their family, having little to say in their choice of marriage partner, or any decision-making. However Mrinal, the heroine of the film, puts up constant battle, withdraws into herself and writes poetry as a form of escape. Finally, through the suicide of an adopted daughter who

was forced to marry a mad man, she sees her path of release and leaves her husband's home never to return. In her first and only letter to her husband, she explains that there is no bitterness in her. That she was treated well — fed and clothed and had no wants that were unattended, but the treatment of Bindu (the adopted girl) showed her the real position of women in society. For its time the subject matter was very powerful. In fact even today it is very relevant.

Topics covered by the symposium were South Asian Women in Canadian Society — A Minority Within A Minority, addressed by Dr Barsa Kelly, and the Role of Women in Pakistan Today by Sadeqa Siddiqui. There was a lively discussion after these two presentations, followed by a lunch prepared by members of the SACC co-op. In the afternoon the gathering broke up into four workshops that covered topics such as Women and Work, Women and Family Violence, South Asian Women Refugees in Montreal, and Women and South Asian Cultural Perspective.

The cultural evening was a great success and among the highlights were a sitar and tabla recital by two women — a very rare occurrence in the classical music world. Stephanie Donchey played the sitar and Shalini Thakur played the tabla. Their performance met with resounding

applause from the audience. The other highlight was a play written for the occasion by Rahul Varma, a member of Teesri Duniya, called Ghar Ghar ki Kahani, which deals with the issue of marriage and is reviewed separately. Azra Naqvi recited an Urdu poem she had written herself. Two children, Samantha Lee Chew Quinn and Gitanjali Jain gave a violin recital.

As in India there is a growing awareness of women's issues, largely through the untiring efforts of the newly emerging groups, so too among among the Montreal South Asians, there is a growing awareness that all is not fine and dandy with the community — that there are serious problems that will not go away and have to be addressed collectively in order to be solved. It is organizations such as SACC and Teesri Duniya, which are actively engaged in consciousness-raising and problem-solving around these issues. Therefore the celebration of International Women's Day in Montreal has a tremendous significance for the health and well-being of the community.

Anemia Widely Prevalent

Causes and Prospects

Anemia is so widespread in South Asia that it is hardly recorded as a disease until it becomes severe enough to lead to extreme physical weakness or other complications. Its incidence behind the glitter of New Delhi, Bombay and other fancy-catching big cities of India and in its vast countryside is alarmingly high. Although anemia affects all age groups, it is especially prevalent in young children and women of productive age and during pregnancy. Like many other common diseases, no special knowledge is required to cope with this problem nor the cost of dealing with is excessively high relative to that incurred on many ventures by the Government of India and its Health Ministry.

In a simple term anemia can be considered to be a decrease in blood hemoglobin, a substance which is present inside red blood cells and which is essential for transporting oxygen from the atmosphere to all living tissues of the body. Hemoglobin is a protein with iron at its core. It is the iron which serves to capture oxygen and then release it to various cells of the body. No function of the body can be efficiently performed without constant supply of oxygen. Thus a decrease in hemoglobin means a decrease in the oxygen delivery system and when it is too severe, it can lead to various physical and psychological abnormalities and in a fair number of cases to death.

According to generally accepted norms for the Indian population, normal hemoglobin value for women is said to be 11 g/100 ml blood and for men 12 g/100 ml blood. Values lower than that indicate anemia and lower the value the more severe is the anemia.

Broadly speaking there are two types of anemia: microcytic and megaloblastic. The most prevalent form of anemia in India is microcytic in which red blood cells are small in size and contain less than normal amount of hemoglobin. This is invariably caused because of a deficiency of iron. Iron deficiency is caused by poor supply in diet, increased need such as during growth as in young children or during pregnancy or increased loss such as during menstruation, but most commonly in India because of parasitic infestations notably hookworm infestation.

The social cost of anemia is excessive. Aside from proper health, which ought to be treated as basic right of any member of the society, anemia severely interferes with optimum physical and mental performance. On the top of all this it can lead to several complications, all of which in turn accentuate the severity of anemia. And this scourge to Indian society can be eliminated with existing resources in terms of food.

Young children and women are especially affected because of their high requirement. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) survey (Technical Series no. 2, volume 35, 1982), the total number of women in their reproductive

years in developing countries excluding China were 600 million. At any point in time, about 16% of all women between the age of 15 and 49 are pregnant and an equal number lactating. Thus about 200 million women were in a stage which required high iron in their diet. Approximately 50% of nonpregnant and 75% of pregnant women suffered from anemia. Thus a total of 250 million women in the Third World, mainly Asia and Africa, excluding China, suffered from anemia. This number alone will make anemia as one of the commonest diseases in the developing countries.

In a survey done in India covering a population of nearly 20,000 women between 1958 to 1977, the percentage of anemia among pregnant women was over 60%, higher than the estimate of 40% for Africa and 17% for Latin America. In Asia, India and Bangladesh have the highest percentage of women suffering from anemia.

Although death purely due to anemia is not so common, this can be so during pregnancy. For example 20% to 40% of maternal deaths at the Medical College Hospital Nagpur, Maharashtra between 1955 and 1964 were due to anemia. It was also found that abortions, premature births, bleeding after delivery and low-birth weight babies are especially common among women with low hemoglobin levels.

Socio-economic factors responsible for such high incidence of anemia in India are well known though the solution is not simple as long as a vast majority of the population remains extremely poor and as long as pregnant and lactating women and growing children are not provided with additional care than is accorded to the rest of the population. The contrary is true in India. Most estimates on basic nutritional requirements pay, at best, attention to number of calories in the diet and not to any degree of balance in the diet. As it is, the food of nearly 70% of India's population is nutritionally inadequate. It is poor in essential minerals like iron, it is poor as far as vitamins are concerned notably folic acid and vitamin B12 both of which are needed for normal red cell function.



FROM INDIA TODAY

Polio Major Cause of Infantile Lameness

A recent health survey in 12 states and 4 union territories has revealed that polio is the "single major cause" of lameness among children in the 5-8 years age-group. Sixty-seven % of the children in the urban areas and 62% in the villages were affected.

The incidence of polio was found to be the minimum in Orissa and the maximum in Rajasthan. In Orissa, it was 0.7 and 0.8 per 1000 children in the urban area and rural area respectively. The numbers in Rajasthan are 2.5 and 3.1 per 1000 in urban and rural areas.

On another issue, leprosy appears to be spreading in the country. According to the Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Kumud Joshi, 25 new districts afflicted with leprosy had been identified on the basis of endemicity. According to the minister, 302,848 leprosy patients had been detected till December 1983, 287,108 of whom had been brought under treatment.

OVER 2 MILLION BIHARIS IN SMALL SHOPS DEPRIVED OF MINIMUM WAGES

At least two million people in Bihar employed in hotels, roadside stalls, shops and with commercial vehicles are being deprived of minimum wages under the labor laws and also work under severe conditions. This was reported by the Daily Telegraph on March 16. According to the newspaper, the state labor department pleaded ignorance to violations of any labor statutes as far as the conditions of these people were concerned. The department is responsible for registering commercial establishments and vehicles and collects taxes from them. In the 55,000 shops that the labor department investigated, it found gross violations of minimum-wages regulations and registration statutes in more than 28,000 of them.

Priest Suspended for Supporting Dalits

Over 5,000 Dalit Christians held a demonstration in Kottayam on December 31 demanding equality within their Church. Later they marched to a school of the Church of South India where its diocesan general council was in its annual session. They were not allowed to enter the school compound. A clergyman and a leader of the demonstrators said they had been manhandled by the police. The demonstrators went on a mass fast and dispersed after pledging to continue their struggle for justice.

Reverend M.J. Joseph of the Church of South India diocese of Madhya Kerala, a leader of the demonstration, was suspended from exercising his ministerial functions because, according to a diocesan spokesman, "Under the cover of the so-called liberation movement, he has been preaching anti-church, anti-bishop, and against the doctrines of the Church throughout the diocese." Rev. Joseph has been reportedly associated with the efforts of 'backward class Christians' of the diocese to secure from the diocese attention to the need for them to be adequately represented in the ministry and the decision-making bodies of the diocese.

Both the Syrian Christians and Dalit Christians (who are of untouchable origin) reportedly constitute the membership of the Church of South India, Central Kerala Diocese. Dalit Christians account for 40% of the membership of the Church but they being side-tracked from the mainstream of the diocesan life. The election of the previous Bishop from a backward class could not be accepted by many. Dalit clergymen were being denied preferments. To fight injustice in the Church, the Dalit Christians launched "The Movement of Faith for Liberation and People" which interprets the faith and commitment of the suppressed Christians with the conviction that the people are equal before the gospel and god. They described the present Church as "a club of

the elite." According to the Movement, top posts in the Church were being monopolized by members who had joined the Anglican communion from the Syrian Churches of Kerala. They submitted a memorandum to the present Bishop demanding just, proper representation in the diocese and all the decision-making bodies of the Church. They also demanded redrawing of constituencies so that the weaker sections get a proper representation, abolition of the Church membership fees which has been doubled this year and which prevents them from exercising their votes, and fair appointment to all posts within the Church. These demands were turned down by the Bishop and the diocesan following which the Movement decided to demonstrate outside the annual diocesan meeting.

According to a report in the Dalit Voice, problem is common for all the Churches which with the best of intentions sought to evangelize "Harijans and Girijans" but found themselves unable to demolish the caste barrier. The Dalit demonstration and dharna and fast which shook Kottayam was not reported in the three Christian daily newspapers.

Excerpted from Dalit Voice

Crimes Against Dalits

P. Venkatasubbaiah, the Minister of State for Home, informed the Rajya Sabha that 6,903 cases of crime were registered against scheduled castes in the country during the period from July to December, 1983. The highest number of atrocities were committed in Madhya Pradesh with 2,452 crimes reported against scheduled castes, while Bengal registered the least with only four.

Attempts to Destroy Dharavi Slum in Bombay

Dr. A.R. Desai, a prominent social scientist and author of many books, said in Bangalore on March 3 that rulers in India has hatched a plot to destroy Dharavi, Asia's largest slum right in the heart of Bombay, by throwing out the poor slum-dwellers and building houses for the rich. Desai who lives close to the slum inhabited by several thousands of Tamil Dalits and Muslims, was a human rights meeting. He added that such a systematic drive to throw out the poor is part of what is described as city beautification. To them, the poor are a nuisance. And Dharavi has proved a bottleneck between the busy South Bombay and the mainland.

According to Desai, the recent visit of Rajiv Gandhi is a preparation towards this. The plot will be executed by engineering communal clash between Hindus and Muslims and language riots between Maharashtrians and Tamils. Already tension is building up. Many activists who protested Rajiv's visit to Dharavi were arrested before his arrival. Desai commented that no newspaper has so far revealed this plot.

An appeal in Dalit Voice said that "What is happening to Dharavi will be the fate of all slums. The Ruling Class doesn't want our people to come to cities. Dharavi is a stronghold of Dalit Panthers and Ambedkarites. We have reports that Shiv Sena and RSS are being used to destroy our people. We call upon Dalit Panthers led by Marathi Dalits to immediately organize resistance squads. Tamil Dalits with Tamil Muslims should join hands in forging a united front. Human rights organizations and sympathetic Press people may be involved. Court action may be also taken."

from Dalit Voice

Ghar Ghar ki Kahani

VIJAYA MULAY

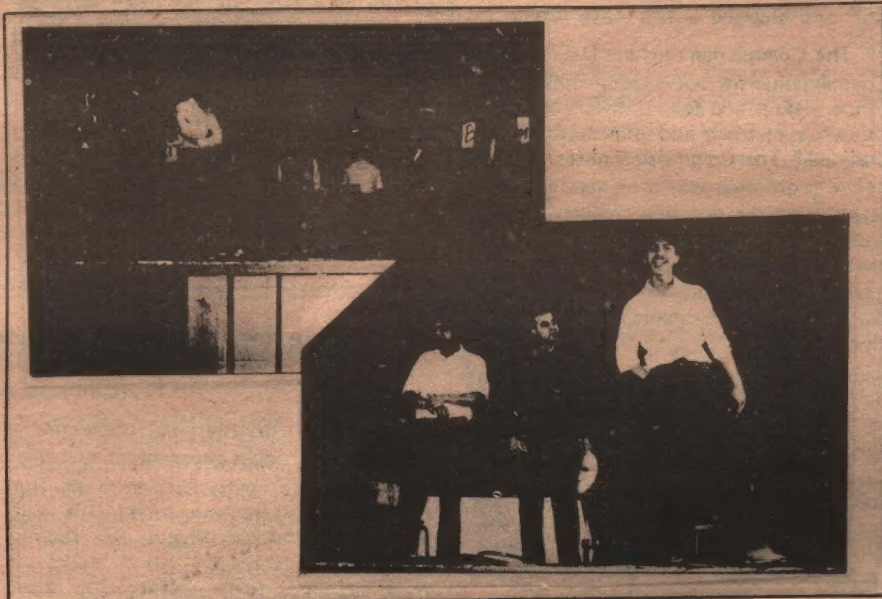
The Montreal-based organization Teesri Duniya presented a play titled *Ghar Ghar ki Kahani* (tale of every household) to a well-packed house on March 31. The 50-minute play was part of an evening's program and marked the end of the Women's Day celebrations organized in Montreal by the South Asia Community Centre and other organizations.

Shobha, the heroine of the play, is educated and is working as a teacher. But an unmarried girl is a stigma to the family and she is looked upon as a burden. Several prospective suitors have come and gone because Shobha did not want to marry any of them. And now the parents Ram Udar and his wife are desperate. Billa, her brother, is also anxious about her marriage for a special reason of his own. He cannot marry unless and until she is married. Finally a boy working in Canada is found. The dowry and other conditions of the marriage are agreed upon but Shobha refuses to enter into such a business deal of a marriage. The final solution of beating her to make her more pliant is adopted by the father. But though beaten and pressured to conform to the norm, Shobha remains determined to break the shackles which have been binding women for centuries.

Playwright Rahul Varma and director Rana Bose had apparently taken into account the limitations of props, lights, curtains, etc., and also the fact that their slender budget would not make it possible for them to hire appropriate drops, footlights, spotlights, etc. All they had to work on was the bare stage with a black drop at the back. The University of Quebec had thought of stripping the old theater and using the space for some other job. But after stripping the stage of almost everything, the plan was abandoned; yet nothing was put back again. These limitations were overcome by several devices very cleverly. The freeze and unfreeze technique, the device of the characters turning their backs to the audience and standing still when one scene was over worked extremely well. The device of using placards to show kitchen, bedroom, etc., was also good but at times one felt that the organizers felt compelled to use all the placards that they had made, even when they were really not necessary.

To make the story more universal and not limit it to the house of Ram Udar only, Rahul Varma used the device of having a Sutradhar — literally one who holds the strings in his hands. Sutradhar is a very familiar character in all Sanskrit plays; it is he who introduces the Kathavastu — the story — and then either completely disappears till the Bharat

would throw up more and more of such rebels; and they will keep on arising from the pyre like the mythical Phoenix. Shobha's defiant speech and Shakha's peroration were the highlights of the play and one could see that many handkerchiefs were out to wipe wet eyes when the play ended.



Vakya — epilogue — or assumes the role of one of the characters in the play. This device of a sutradhar was used with a difference by Rahul. First, the role was played by a woman — a sutradharika — Shakha, and she participated in the action throughout. She was more like a Greek chorus, commenting on events and speaking to the audience. In the end, her role changes. In the place of Bharat Vakya, she repeats the message of Shobha and becomes the symbol of the emerging militant womanhood that is seeking its rightful place in society against heavy odds. When Shakha is threatened by the male accusers as the instigator of rebellion, the playwright introduces a younger version of Shakha to indicate that the death of an individual cannot stop this struggle of women because each new generation

The play was written by Rahul Varma specially for the occasion, was finished and rehearsed in a very short time. That it created empathy and touched the hearts of the audience speaks volumes for the work done by the playwright, the director and the cast. Rita Bhatia as Shobha, Azra Naqvi as Shakha, Shree Mulay as the mother did an excellent job. Equally well-portrayed was Ram Udar by Rahul Varma and Billa by Minoo Gundevia. A very promising play indeed. There is no doubt that Rahul Varma has the potential for becoming a good dramatist provided he works hard and develops more sensitivity towards characterization and play structure.

What appears to be his main shortcoming is the tendency to add sentences

or characters merely to produce somehow and anyhow a laugh. The treatment of a play like *Ghar Ghar ki Kahani* has to be different from that of a farce like *Bhanumati ka Petara*, which he wrote and was presented on the same day. In a serious play, the comic interlude has a place only if it is generic to the situation and enhances and supports whatever is being shown. If it is not generic, the comic interlude or characters merely weaken the play, and dilute. Every sentence, every scene must carry the action forward to its logical end. The desperation of Ram Udar to marry off Shobha is highlighted when a man who has come to inspect a machine in the flat upstairs walks into Ram Udar's house and is mistaken for a suitor who was to have come to see Shobha. The man's questions about the old model or new model, the quantity of work that can be done in respect of a machine. Ram Udar thinks that they are in respect of the girl. He finds the terminology strange but the prospective bridegroom has to be cajoled. The comic situation created by the misunderstanding is an appropriate element but many clichés that he has used take away from the strength of the play. There was also no need to take recourse to cheap puns on words like Shakha or Udar. It was also unnecessary to make Shakha enter Ram Udar's house under false pretenses. These things contributed nothing to the play but held up its flow. The time spent on these things could have been better utilized if more depth was given to the characters of Ram Udar and Shobha's mother. True the mother was traditional but her responses need not have been identical to her husband's. In real life, even though the traditional woman might accept her fate, there is more compassion for a daughter and resentment against her own lot at the subconscious level. We also get no insight as to why Ram Udar allowed his daughter to be educated and be a teacher; was it to increase her value in the marriage market as is sometimes the case or were her earnings necessary for the running of the household? Bringing in these nuances would have given more depth to the play, and made it more effective. One thing however is certain; there is definitely a talent here that needs to be trained and tortured.

SC Resents Police Raids on MP Village

The Supreme Court expressed its shock on March 8 over the alleged police raid in Pendran village in Madhya Pradesh and arrest of tribals there for filing a writ petition in the Court against the existence of bonded labor.

"Instead of granting protection to the weaker sections, the State is going about harassing and oppressing them," the Supreme Court order said. "The State is making it difficult for them to raise their voice against exploitation."

The Chhattisgarh Krishak Mazdoor Sangh had filed a writ petition to the Supreme Court some time back complaining of bonded labor in the Raipur area. A Division bench consisting of Justices P.N.Bhagwati, D.P.Madon and Ranganath Mishra had appointed two commissioners to investigate.

The commissioners visited the village in February. But as soon as they left the village, the police raided the village and searched for the leaders of the Sangh. When they could not be found, the police arrested whomever they found in the village, asking them to withdraw the case.

In its order, the Supreme Court directed the SP in Raipur to personally file a statement about the allegations, and what he has done about them. The DM has been asked to investigate personally into the conduct of the SDM concerned.



Threat to Farooq

(continued from page 1)

Earlier during his tenure as chief secretary in Maharashtra, he was appointed a trustee of Antulay's infamous Indira Gandhi Pratibha Pratishthan.

The center already has strong Cong(I) loyalists like A.P.Sharma in West Bengal, and A.N.Banerjee in Karnataka. With the recent shifts and appointments, it seems the Gandhi government has completed the transformation of the position of governor to an active one from being a ceremonial one, especially an active one in the service of the ruling party at the center.

Punjab People's Cultural Manch Formed

Punjab People's Culture Manch successfully held its annual function in Chhandra village on March 10-11. A 23-member committee was elected with Gursharan Singh of Amritsar Natak Kala Kendar as president, Sabjinder Kedar as general secretary and Surjit Brar as treasurer. The Manch decided to undertake among others, publication of good cultural books, making a good Punjabi film, compiling cassettes of good Punjabi songs, organizing a play by the Manch using the joint talents of many drama clubs, arranging programs by village level drama committees at various places and a poetry session.

A drama competition was organized during the function in which drama clubs from different parts of Punjab participated. The dramas were held on a packed stage which was built with the help of money sent by IPANA. The function was attended by thousands of people. IPANA was represented by Satinder Singh. According to a report in Punjabi monthly Samta, the atmosphere was so peaceful and enjoyable that one forgot about the prevailing tense situation in Punjab.

'Gandhi' Brings Profit to NFDC

According to the Deputy Information Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad, the National Film Development Corporation has made Rs 50 million in commercial gains on the movie 'Gandhi' that it partly financed.

Principal in Tamil Nadu Suspended for Play Mocking MGR-Jayalalitha

The principal of a women's polytechnic in Thanjavur was suspended on March 13 following a strong plea with the chief minister, M.G.Ramachandran, by the local MGR Fans' Association on a complaint that Jayalalitha and MGR were mocked at the hostel day a year ago. The suspension has been challenged by the principal, Sundari Vellayan, in the Madras High Court, which has stayed the suspension.

At the hostel day in question, some students staged a skit featuring a mock assembly session. According to the local fans' association, the skit centered around Jayalalitha and MGR, the "unseemly" behavior of ruling party MLAs, and the midday meals scheme. The association sent a petition to MGR demanding the immediate dismissal of the principal.

After a month, the director of technical education sent a A.D.O. letter to the principal. The principal sent in an explanation along with an apology from the concerned teacher.

Seven months later, the principal was suddenly transferred to a polytechnic in Coimbatore. Vellayan asked for two months joining time as her youngest daughter was studying in a local school but this was turned down. The principal took her new post on March 1 this year. Two weeks later, she was suspended.

Report on Communal Violence in Bihar

Biharsharif, the district headquarters of Nalanda district (which was carved out of Patna district in 1972), was the scene of a communal carnage between April 30 and May 5, 1981, in which officially 48 persons lost their lives. The clashes were triggered, as they generally are, by a petty fight. But tension had been building up for long and escalated over the issue of land. At least 13 cases had been filed because of this. In such a situation a claim was made by a section of the people, probably under RSS influence, that the land belonged to a temple and a Shivaling was set up. The minority community won the court case. For the implementation of the court order, a meeting was called by the district authority on May 1. But a day before the meeting riots erupted.

After the riots, among other measures, such as the decision to impose collective fines on villages where riots took place, and suspension of several officials in the district administration, a commission of inquiry was set up by the state government under V. Balasubrahmanyam. The commission's report, which is believed to have been submitted sometime in 1982, was neither considered nor placed before the State assembly. However, the January 18 issue of the Telegraph has now provided extracts from the report which clearly establish the culpability of the authorities.

The commission, despite its inability to elaborate on the role of the RSS — it merely says that the "accumulation of tensions over many months... apparently led to a state of preparedness among the majority community, some of whom were RSS activists" — exposes the failure of the intelligence wing and the district authorities. The commission says that in view of the build up of tensions "it was necessary for the intelligence wing to have found facts and to have sent the reports to all concerned." The District Magistrate (DM) and the Superintendent of Police (SP) in fact told the commission that they had "no information regarding the likelihood of the incident," i.e., riots. The DIG and the Police Commissioner, says the report, came to know of the riots, which began on April 30, only on May 1. The DM and SP underplayed the riots and informed the state government

in Patna on May 2 that "all preventive steps have been taken to ensure that no untoward incident takes place further." They however, changed their mind the very next day, on May 3, and now admitted that the "situation continues to be grim." In fact, riots tapered off only after May 5 with the deployment of CRP and BSF and stopped a few days later.

The Commission raps the DIG and the Commissioner for not making "their presence visible and felt in different sensitive areas of town and immediate neighborhood." The Commission notes that no police protection was provided for buses, leave aside the question of diverting the traffic. The Commission also points out that "there was no implementation of the government instruction that in a communal emergency, rumors must be effectively scotched."

In a clear reference to the incompetence of the authorities, the Commission says: "It is a sad commentary on the functioning of the official agencies during the riots that while goondas had a free time, burning and killing, only one single police bullet found a target and that one was not aimed at anyone in particular but hit a wholly innocent person." This is surely a remarkable feat from a force which is ordinarily so trigger-happy. The Commission in fact states that police were not given any "standing order" to open fire and maintains that the "standing order" alleged to have been given by the DM and the SP are a fabrication and an afterthought.

The Commission's report, however, seems to fail in one respect. It does not seek to answer whether or not the incompetence of the authorities has something to do with communal bias in the administration. The administration does not operate in vacuum and is scarcely neutral or unaffected by the communal or other socio-cultural divides. And especially after the experience of the Moradabad riots this is important to bear in mind. It is, nevertheless, clear from the strong criticism of the authorities and especially the district administration why the report was suppressed.

from Eco. & Pol. Weekly

Human Rights Function in Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh Unit of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) organized a day-long function on January 30, Martyr's Day, to focus on human rights in Madhya Pradesh and other parts of India.

Dr. Anil Sadgopal, vice-president, Madhya Pradesh-PUCL, pointed out that PUCL took up issues not only connected with police repression but also other issues like kesari dal in Rewa and Satna, and water and air pollution in Nagda which too affect the fundamental rights of people. As long as people live below the poverty line, human rights would remain a major concern he said.

K.D. Sharma of CPDRS spoke about the violation of democratic rights by even the West Bengal Left Front Government. Jeevan Kumar of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), spoke about the police terror in the Telengana area of Andhra Pradesh.

P.K. Murthy of IFTU, Chhindwara, highlighted the plight of coal workers. In the Chhindwara area, workers were provided with water pumped out of the mine as drinking water, which is harmful to health. Due to the mechanization poli-

down from 65,000 to 9,000.

Shankar Guha Niyogi, trade union leader from Chhatisgarh, also highlighted this aspect of the impact of mines mechanization on workers giving detailed examples from Dalli-Rajahara and Bailadilla iron ore mines. Besides, he pointed out how mechanization with expensive imported machines, costing billions of rupees, had increased production only marginally. On the one hand 'productivity' campaigns were being emphasized and on the other, steel was being imported even at the cost of stockpiling here. He emphasized that the slogan of increasing productivity, without simultaneous increase in production, was nothing but an excuse to lay off workers and add to the unemployed millions.

Rajendra Mathur referring to the lack of interest of the middle class in human rights issues, deplored the disappearance of idealism with the growth of the "consumer" culture. The Asiad of 1982 symbolically marked the beginning of this culture. He questioned the usefulness of expecting a response from the middle class and said that the real fight for human rights would be conducted in villages and towns where the deprived 50 billion of our poor people live.

from Frontier

Tamil Nadu Police Indicted for Woman's Death in Custody

The commission appointed by the Tamil Nadu government to inquire into the death of a 19-year-old Harijan woman at Kitchipalayam police station in Salem in March 1983 has concluded that it was a case of murder.

The report of the retired Judge, A.M. Nanjappan, who constituted the Commission, states that the police staged a "drama" to make out that the girl, Deivamani, committed suicide by hanging herself by a sari. She had been arrested on a charge of stealing stainless steel tumblers and plates from a neighbor's house.

The commission was unable to identify the person or persons responsible for the death or determine if she had been raped before being killed. No autopsy was performed. Telegrams had been sent to the chief minister and top officials on the night of the death itself. Still, the state government did not act promptly to determine the facts.

After placing the report in the state Assembly, the government announced a detailed investigation by the CID, Crime Branch.

Amnesty International's 1983 Report on India

(continued from page 1)

"Amnesty International respectfully requests the Indian government to bring into force forthwith Section 3 of the Constitution 44th Amendment Act and thus provide further safeguards to secure that Indian citizens are not deprived of their right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, embodied in Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

2. THE RIGHT NOT TO BE SUBJECTED TO TORTURE

"A number of allegations of torture have come before the highest courts of India, and in several cases, the Supreme Court has actively pursued reports of torture and been able to grant relief to the victims concerned. Whereas the majority of cases of tortures are believed to occur during interrogation in police custody, the Supreme Court has also investigated specific charges against senior jail officials, allegedly involved in ill-treatment or torture of prisoners — including juvenile prisoners — by jail personnel. However, the number of cases brought to the courts is very small compared to the large number of allegations about the widespread use of police brutality and torture in India because the majority of the victims are poor and either not aware of the possibilities to approach the courts for redress or lack the necessary means to obtain access to the court, although thousands of complaints are filed each year against the police.

"For example, according to the First Report of the National Police Commission, 76,444 complaints were received by the Superintendent of Police in a survey covering 12 Indian states during 1977, allegations which were, according to police sources, wholly or partially substantiated in 4,797 cases. An analysis of police torture in 8 Indian states (Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and New Delhi), ... statistics demonstrate that independent investigations through judicial inquiries into torture allegations lead to a far higher % of findings of police liability for torture than the holding of inquiries by the police against members of its own forces itself. Nevertheless, the number of instances where judicial inquiries were held was negligible compared to the thousands of cases in which police torture is alleged in India each year. ... it appears that the relief through the courts is not available to the vast majority of those allegedly subject to these illegal practices each year and that the existing laws and machinery to deal with complaints against the police has not been effective in halting the widespread occurrence of ill-treatment and torture in police stations.

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

"Furthermore in a disturbing number of cases each year, people under inter-

rogation by the police died in or shortly after release from police custody, reportedly as a result of torture. Many of these cases concern alleged criminal offenders but other cases concern members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and members of the "Untouchable" and of the tribal community. One example concerns Raja, a young man from Kulsilapottu village, Vaniyambadi, Tamil Nadu, belonging to the "untouchable" community, who was arrested in April 1982 along with his two brothers as a result of a local complaint. They were reportedly released on bail by the Tirupattur sub-magistrate but rearrested the following day by the Inspector of Police and tortured. According to a report by members of the People's Union for Civil Liberties published in March this year, whereas his two brothers were released, Raja died in custody and his body was reportedly disposed of by the police. In Appendix A to this review, Amnesty International has described 10 reports of people dying in police custody allegedly as a result of torture. These are some of the cases in 1983 reported in the Indian press but the list cannot any means be considered to be comprehensive...

"Those responsible for torture, ill-treatment and death in custody are only seldom subjected to criminal proceedings. One example is the case of a teenage girl belonging to the "untouchable" community in Tamil Nadu, Deivanai, who died in a police station on 15 March, the relatives believed because of injuries sustained in police custody, but the police maintains she committed "suicide" (details of the case are described in Appendix A)....

"Amnesty International recommends that the Indian government consider proposing that the right not to be tortured be included among the fundamental rights protected in the constitution. It appeals to the Government to renew its expressions of concerns about torture to all Indian states and especially to those state governments where torture and deaths in police custody have reportedly occurred.

"Although Amnesty International's files are not comprehensive, deaths in custody allegedly as a result of torture have been reported from Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and New Delhi territory.

"Amnesty International furthermore urges the Government to establish independent inquiries into all cases of torture and deaths in custody reported to it, including the cases listed in the Appendix to this review and publish their outcome in its entirety.

"As Amnesty International has already recommended in earlier reports it believes that such investigations can be best be undertaken through the establishment of a totally independent judicial body to investigate such complaints...."

First Indian In Space

Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma of the Indian Air Force became the first Indian on April 3 to go into space when he was launched aboard the Soyuz T-11 spaceship from the Baikonour cosmodrome in Kazakhstan along with two Soviet astronauts. The two other members of the team are Col. Yuri Maleyshev and Gennady Strekalov. Maleyshev is a pilot astronaut and commander of the mission, while Strekalov is an engineer astronaut.

nauts filmed the Bay of Bengal, Indian desert zones, the Ganges valley and the Himalayas. The photographic surveys are intended to promote geological and agricultural projects in India. Sharma also talked to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in a hookup between Salyut and New Delhi which was carried to Indian and Soviet TV via a Soviet Satellite.

The space mission also reportedly help



Indian (centre) and Soviets report before the launch.

The Soyuz spacecraft later docked with Salyut-7 space station which is already in orbit. They returned safely to earth on April 11.

While in space, the astronauts took photographic surveys of various parts of India, among other things. According to the Soviet news agency Tass, the astro-

combat a fire in Burma by transmitting details of its extent visible from space. The fire was raging over an area of 20 square miles.

Sharma was later honored with the Order of Lenin and a gold star medal by the Russian government. His Soviet col-

leagues, Malyshev and Strekalov were also awarded the Order of Lenin. Wing Commander Ravish Malhotra, another Indian who was trained as a member of 3 person backup crew was awarded the Order of Friendship Among Peoples. Indian government gave the Ashok Chakra to Sharma and his Russian companions in the space voyage. Malhotra was honored with Kirti Chakra.

USEFULNESS QUESTIONED

According to Kuldip Nayar, the decision to participate in the mission was politically motivated and was taken by Indira Gandhi without even consulting any expert from Indian Space Organization. When the Soviet Union first suggested joint space flight with India, the Janata party was in power; the offer was declined because top experts when consulted, saw no scientific gains for India. However, when Gandhi came back to power, the offer was repeated by Soviets and Gandhi readily accepted.

The objection of the senior Indian scientists to the project was that India was not ready for any follow-up program and that no useful purpose would be served by launching an Indian into space at present. But the experts had no option and had to implement Gandhi's decision. According to Nayar, Sharma, hardly touched any of the instruments in the spacecraft except for the cameras. His role was publicized to be test whether Yoga exercises could be of any help in dealing with space sickness. Sharma is supposed to go back to his duty in the Air Force.

The whole thing turned out to be a Soviet show and Soviet Union got much publicity. For days, the Indian media gave the flight prime space; Gandhi also got much publicity. As Nayar said, all that happened was that the Russians took an Indian guest abroad their spacecraft.

Third World Scientists Form Academy

A group of distinguished scientists from 15 developing countries including 9 scientists from India have formed a Third World Academy of Sciences. Of the 28 scientists proposing the idea, 11 met last November at the International center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, to formulate the direction the academy they perceive should take.

Nobel Laureate Physicist Abdus Salam of Pakistan was elected the President and an Indian scientist Prof. MGK Menon was elected the vice president of the academy. The academy has the objectives of "giving recognition to high-caliber scientific research performed by individual scientists from developing countries, to facilitate mutual contacts, to strengthen their scientific research work and to foster it for the benefit of human welfare and the development of the third world."

RAJ REDDY HONORED BY FRENCH

Dr. Raj Reddy, a computer scientist at Carnegie-Mellon University and the director of the Robotics Institute there, was awarded the Legion of Honor by France's President Francois Mitterand. Reddy was honored for his involvement with the French government funded World center for Computer Science and Human Resource in Paris.



Can Democracy Survive in the Republic

There could also be another view: that the poor, the naked, the beggars, are in fact standing in our way, and the thing to do is to make India strong. So what is very interesting here, following what Ashis said, is a reversal of attitudes from what was traditionally thought to be the democratic process.

UPSURGE IN GRASSROOTS

Kothari: On the one hand, there is the tremendous appeal of the democratic political process for the people. As a result, there is an awakening, they are becoming conscious of their rights, they are staking their claim.

On the other hand, there is a new set of actors that has emerged at the grassroots - highly educated, young, idealistic people who almost remind you of the national movement, working at the grassroots rural level among the Dalits, among women, in the north-east, in Jharkhand.

And in various regional movements, you will find highly committed people, a new set of actors honest to the core, willing to sacrifice. I see a great future among the grassroots forces that are at work.

GRASSROOTS ISSUES

D.L.Sheth: Grassroots workers have taken up a variety of issues, which are not being taken up by the parties and which have been consciously been given up by the State.

Nothing is reaching below - neither services nor incomes, nothing at all. It is in this context that new issues are being picked up by the grassroots movements in terms of public health and accessibility to public health, education, ecology, women's rights, the rights of tribals to their own surroundings.

Kothari: Can I add one thing? There is one thing that the grassroots movement is doing. For the first time, it is making politics multidimensional. For instance, in the Chipko movement, or in what Shankar Guha Niyogi is doing in organizing the

miners, not only are they asking for economic rights, they are at the same time waging a battle against alcoholism. They are aiming for social reforms, such as improving the status of women.

The present movement in Karnataka is not only asking for the right prices for the peasants, but also for the right wages for the laborers, and it is not allowing certain minerals to be shipped out. It is a multifaceted peasant movement.

The most interesting thing is that what we should normally have expected from political or development agencies is in fact emerging from the consciousness of the people as a result of the grassroots process.

Sheth: What has happened is an agglomeration of issues. If you go by issues and not by statistics, in the last five years alone, people-oriented issues have come to the fore in several ways, right from human rights and civil liberties issues to survival issues, the protection of the environment and women's issues, particularly among the poor classes. A whole variety of issues has agglomerated. These are now being linked with political processes, not necessarily through parties, but nonparty political formations which take up these issues; and if you think in terms of agglomeration and the spread of issues, I think there is a widespread impact.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE

Krishna: I would make only two points about this grassroots sector which is emerging. First, I would very much like to know its numerical strength in terms of the number of workers involved, the beneficiaries of this movement, and the number of villages involved, the reason being that one cannot foresee whether the macro-numbers or the macro-dynamics of politics will be affected at some points by the growth of the grassroots movements at the present rate unless we have some notion of the magnitude of this movement.

The second point I would make is that it is necessary for the political scientists who are studying this sector to develop a typology for these movements.

ROLE OF GRASSROOTS

Nandy: I feel that the grassroots movements have given a new kind of depth and width to the democratic process in India, however experimental they may be. I am not saying that they will succeed, I am not saying they will take over Indian democracy, I am not saying that after a few decades, these movements will coalesce into a party.

Nevertheless, these movements have given a new kind of content to Indian democracy. For instance, only a generation ago, much of the indigenous endorsement for the democratic process came from rather wishy-washy attempts to go back to the past.

We don't have to do that today. We have a democratic experience and a democratic system, however truncated, and we have partly acquired the capacity to legitimize this system, not necessarily in terms of a history of democratic states or regions in India, but in terms of of Indian thought itself. And this process has been authenticated by the grassroots movements. For example, take the old dichotomy or trichotomy, if you like, between rajniti, rashtraniti and lokaniti.

Now, I think, after Independence, we did emphasize rashtraniti or rajniti, but lokaniti went into a kind of recession.

For the first time, the grassroots movements have locked these two coordinates of Indian politics - rajniti and rashtraniti on the one side, and lokaniti on the other - into a kind of dialectical wrench. And I see some interesting cultural developments coming out of it because this may allow new kinds of experimentation, or a play with dualities, in the areas and ideas of science and technology, or even say, new forms of political mobilization.

(continued from page 2)

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Krishna: In my view, I think that the first point that should be understood is that mainstream politics in the near term is like industrial investment. Everybody who enters it does so for profit. In fact, profit rates can be calculated. And there is therefore no possibility whatever of this mainstream politics becoming redistributive until the beneficiaries of the redistribution, or the victims of the present system, generate enormous and compelling political pressures on the mainstream.

The second point that I would make is that the present beneficiary groups, having profited from the democratic industry as it runs now, will keep it going until it is threatened by dispersed, scattered violence on a large scale. Until that kind of violence erupts, I think the present Establishment has nothing to lose from continuing the present process.

Over 30,000 Textile Workers Laid Off In Ahmedabad

The national executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party has charged Indira Gandhi government and Congress(I) government in Gujarat with "callous indifference" in the closure of 16 textile mills in Ahmedabad. BJP's vicepresident Ram Jethmalani has demanded that the National Textile Corporation or the Gujarat State Textile Corporation take over these mills and save the jobs of over 30,000 workers made jobless by closures.

64% Population Illiterate

The Minister of State for Home, Ram Dulari Sinha, told the parliament recently that according to the 1981 census, over 64% of the population - 424.25 million out of total 665.28 million - was illiterate. Rajasthan had the highest the illiteracy rate - 75.62%, followed by Bihar with 73.80%, Jammu and Kashmir with 73.33, UP with 72.84% and MP with 72.13%.

Ethnic Peace Continues to Elude Sri Lanka

R.N.Raju

Ethnic conflict continues to take severe tolls in Sri Lanka as the peace process initiated earlier has come to a standstill and a political solution keeps eluding the island's political leaders. Recent weeks have witnessed violent actions that have resulted in the deaths of over 50 people and injuries to many. Most of the incidents have taken place near Jaffna and the predominant group that has been affected appears to be the Tamil minority community.

On April 9, eight persons were killed in Jaffna when troops opened fire on a busy hospital road. The firing was said to be in response to an alleged bomb throwing by terrorists on an army truck, according to the government spokesperson. More than 50 were injured in the incident. A series of bomb explosions and gunfire rocked the city most of the day and the town was put under curfew.

On April 11 the Sri Lanka army fired at alleged Tamil terrorists, killing 35 of them when they attacked a Buddhist temple, according to the newspaper, Island. The death toll during this one week alone has been 57. In Madras, Tamil

Eelam Liberation Front president Kovai Mahesan contested the official claim. According to Mahesan, most of the people killed were "innocent unarmed civilians." Mahesan also charged that the recent violence has been provoked by the army, which was responsible for setting many Tamil-owned shops and cars on fire.

The latest incidents in the series of continuing violence affecting the island community has generated anticipated responses from various sections none of

which can pave the way for a peaceful solution to the problem. Important government leaders including the Prime minister of Sri Lanka have been stressing the possibility of Indian intervention. A special national defense fund has been set up by President Jayawardane. There is talk of establishing some sort of a treaty along the lines of the Indo-Soviet treaty with a large power. The proposed visits of the President to China and the US in the next two months is being viewed with anticipation from this point of view. The main Sinhala opposition party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by former premier Sirimavo Bandaranayake has been critical

of the Jayawardane government while at the same time not playing any active role in bringing a resolution to the issue. The Tamil political parties, particularly the TULF has been seeking to involve India in resolving the issue and in the process is adding to its distrust by the majority Sinhala community.

The political parties in Tamil Nadu have been having a field day espousing their solidarity with the Tamils of Sri Lanka while at the same time ignoring the problems and the needs of the Sri Lankan refugees who have come for a temporary stay in Tamil Nadu. Verbal assault on Sri Lankan government and persistent demands for dispatching the Indian army to Sri Lanka are made by the DMK and the AIADMK parties in an effort to outsmart one another for their status as defenders of Tamilian interests. All this has only helped the Sri Lankan government in raising the fear of external intervention among the majority community, consciously or otherwise.

The victims, in the final analysis are the poor Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka who suffer everyday. Jaffna, the major north-

ern city is now being compared to Belfast and life has come to resemble that in a ghost town. With the apparently indiscriminate shootouts by the army in the last few weeks, basic security of life has come to be threatened for the local population.

The present crisis should not be permitted to continue and escalate if the long term political and economic stability of the country are to be ensured. The peace talks that were initiated involving a wide range of political and religious groups should be continued and not abandoned as a result of narrow political gains pursued by the different political parties. The situation is still at a stage where a negotiated solution is accessible. To compare the present situation to those in Punjab and Assam in India and thus seek to justify it as some of the Sri Lankan leaders have done will take the country towards chaos. One cannot seek any satisfaction in the fact that there are other countries that are also leading towards chaos!

IAF Loan to Indira Gandhi

The Chief Election Commissioner recently questioned the use of official aircraft by government leaders for electoral purposes and desired that certain ground rules be laid down to ensure fair play. In recent years, the use of IAF and state aircraft by ruling party leaders has become quite commonplace. It appears that they do not even pay for it.

In answer to a question in Parliament, the Defense Minister said that the IAF had billed Indira Gandhi a sum of Rs 3.9 million for "unofficial tours" during the period January to October 1982. Just about a fifth of the amount has been paid so far, after a year and a half or more.

Paradip Carnage

(continued from page 12)

Nandini Satpathy has also levelled a serious allegation that while invading the workers' colonies, the policemen had raped a number of women.

The situation prevailing in the township and especially in the Atharabanki area on the outskirts of the port township was so tense that it was very difficult to collect information and prepare an objective report on that basis. It is high time that the Government set up a judicial inquiry into the incident or the civil rights bodies sent fact-finding teams there.

The Paradip massacre has exploded the myth that the workers can escape the wrath of the state machinery by enrolling themselves with the unions having the blessings of the ruling party. It has also exposed the mafia in the trade union movement. The professional, middle-class leadership in the trade union movement having affiliations to some parliamentary party does not consider inter-union rivalry to be unethical union behavior. It bothers in the least whether workers' unity is destroyed as a consequence.

Official sources deny that the clash had anything to do with the all-India port workers' strike. At the same time, it is difficult to accept the position that the government's hand was clean. As in the past, this time also, the government decided to break the morale of the striking workers by employing the unlisted workers as blacklegs. Perhaps the trouble would not have originated at the moment at all unless the unlisted workers were encouraged to work during the strike period. Some observers feel that a section of smugglers might have provoked the flare-up with an obvious intention of looting the goods that had accumulated there for lack of transport during the strike. A probe team could possibly unveil the mystery, at least partly.

from Frontier



South-South cooperation could benefit from the relatively high technical standards already achieved in countries like India which is able to produce even complicated machinery. Photo: Eckl

Young Tribal Girls Provide Bonded Labor

The Public Accounts Committee of the Maharashtra assembly has accused the Congress(I) government in the state of its involvement in the payment of Rs 1 million to the Indira Gandhi Pratibha Pratishthan, one of the many trusts that Maharashtra's former Chief Minister Abdul Rahman Antulay floated. Antulay was later convicted for extortion, bribes and corruption.

Presenting the report to the assembly, the Public Accounts Committee Chairman PK Patil said that the committee's investigations had revealed that the Social Welfare Department of the government had processed financial assistance to the trust even though the trust had not applied for any aid. Since there was no provision in the budget for the money, the money was taken out of the government's contingency funds and given to the trust. Furthermore, no records were maintained. A government representative had informed the Public Accounts Committee that there was a file on this case however there was no paper found in that file.

Young tribal girls from Banka, Bihar,

are being exploited as cheap bonded labor and exported to Bombay, Punjab, Vizag and West Bengal, according to Laro Janko, an activist with the Mahila Samaj, Banka, Bihar.

Janko stated that the Associated Cement Factory's exploitation of over 30 miles of land in Jhinkpani has rendered vast tribal areas unfit for cultivation. The impoverished tribals have become cheap labor for contractors.

Many of the girls who have been recruited by contractors have found themselves reduced to the status of bonded labor. About 17 of them are working in the Bombay factory of Gammon India Ltd. The contractor has hired musclemen to keep watch over them. The girls are paid Rs 20 a week and are not allowed to go out. They are also beaten. In winter they are not given clothes. Sometimes they go naked.

Janko appeals to all concerned individuals who wish to help in freeing the girls to contact her at Banka, Chakradharpur PO, Singhbhum District, Bihar.

Christian Marriage Act to be Changed

It is reported that the central government has decided to amend the Christian Marriage Act, mainly to make divorce proceedings easier and more in conformity with the Hindu Marriage Act.

At present, civil law recognizes church weddings but not church annulments.

Also, while Hindus can get divorced for reasons of adultery, cruelty, desertion for two years, change of religion, insanity, leprosy or venereal disease, Christian law gives adultery as the only ground for divorce. Also, while a Christian man can get a divorce on grounds of a single act of adultery by his wife, a Christian woman has to prove "aggravated adultery," that is, adultery "made worse" in some way: incestuous adultery, adultery with bigamy, sodomy, rape or bestiality, adultery with cruelty, or adultery with desertion without reasonable excuse for two years or more.

Dalit Youth Burnt Alive

J.B. Raju,

Puli Laxman, a Dalit youth, 18, was burnt alive by the high caste Hindus of Tejalpur village, Domakonda taluk, Nizamabad district in AP, on Jan 24, 1984. Jagannatha Reddy, a landlord, conspired with others to murder Laxman. On the night of Jan. 23, Reddy and others tied Laxman's legs and hands with ropes and dragged him on the road, beating him on the way to the village office. They tied Laxman to a neem tree and Reddy lighted match while Lakshmiapati poured kerosene on the victim.

An eye witness, Manjula, 11, daughter of Madhusudhana Reddy, gave us an account of the incident and the names of the people involved in the crime. Her version was supported by Bala Narsu, a village servant who tried to stop the attack. The Dalit Fact Finding Committee led by me visited the village and took the evidence of the people.

Though the provocation for the murder appears to be an alleged theft by Laxman, the real cause is the Hindu caste hatred against the boy who had a little property and hence led an independent life, always well dressed, maintaining his self-respect. As a gymnast he was in the forefront of many cultural, social activities. His behavior created a lot of jealousy and hatred among Hindus. So they conspired to finish him.

Comm. on Minorities Calls for Equality Now

CHIN BANERJEE

"Most visible minorities are not participating fully in Canadian society. Opportunities are being denied because visible minorities are frequently believed to be from a different culture and it is believed they will not 'fit' the structures of public and private institutions in Canada. One need only look at the employment practices of police departments, fire departments, government services, universities, the media and private companies to see that visible minorities are consciously or unconsciously denied full participation in almost all Canadian institutions. Visible minorities are, in fact, the invisible members of our society. Canada will be the ultimate loser if we do not take advantage of the skills and abilities which visible minority Canadians have to offer."

So begins the report titled "Equality Now," published on March 28 by the Canadian Parliament's Special Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society. The report is the result of an 8-month inquiry during which the committee of seven members held hearings in 10 cities, received 300 briefs and heard from 130 groups and witnesses.

The report makes 80 recommendations for immediate action in the fields of employment, immigration, education, justice and the law, the media, the arts and government institutions to meet the problems of a "flawed society." It says that

the Federal Government must give greater emphasis to race relations and the concerns of the visible minorities and calls for a full-fledged Ministry of Multiculturalism. It also calls for a Standing Parliamentary Committee and an Advisory Council on Multiculturalism. Among its many important recommendations, the report calls for amendments to the criminal code to facilitate prosecution and conviction for promoting hatred, for additional punishment when a criminal act is racially motivated, and for greater power to the Canadian Human Rights Commission to deal with hate propaganda.

The Committee deserves to be congratulated for its very thoughtful report and its far-ranging recommendations. The work of the committee was made possible because of the anti-racist work done by various community organizations over the last few years, which made it imperative for the Federal Government to look into the problem. All community groups who submitted briefs to the Committee also deserve congratulation for this positive report. IPANA is pleased that the recommendations we offered in our brief have been substantially incorporated in the report. All concerned people will now be watching to see the extent to which these recommendations are implemented.

Women in Montreal Temple Demand Equality

Women members at the Hindu Mission Temple in Montreal feel their active participation in temple activities should be reflected by equal representation on the Executive Committee of the Temple, which is the governing and decision-making body of the organization. There are at present no women Executive Committee members.

Their straightforward and democratic demand has met with firm opposition from the incumbent President. Besides this, the women members who raised this demand, and members of the temple who spoke in their favor, have been receiving threatening phone calls, promising bodily harm unless they withdraw their demand.

The issue remains unresolved with an ongoing debate among temple members on the issue.

PUCL (Rajasthan) Demands Probe into Rape, Firing

The People's Union for Civil Liberties (Rajasthan) has demanded a judicial inquiry into the alleged rape of a woman and subsequent police firing in which three persons were killed in Kotputli in January.

A five-member factfinding committee, which visited Kotputli and talked with a cross-section of the people, says in its report that two policemen were guilty of raping Gayatri Devi, a 25-year-old housewife of Kotputli.

Releasing the report, V.M. Tarkunde said in Delhi that the woman should be helped and the people should be organized to defend their civil and democratic rights.

The committee felt that that though there was a large crowd outside the Kotputli police station, the situation did not warrant firing. The crowd, which was protesting the rape, was neither armed nor violent.

The report also attacked the police behavior after the firing. It said that the police framed a number of cases against leading public figures who had organized the protest.

IPANA Celebrates Bhagat Singh Day

Our Vancouver Correspondent

The Indian People's Association in North America commemorated the 53rd anniversary of the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev with a cultural program on March 25 in New Westminster, British Columbia. Those three great sons of India were hanged by the British on March 23, 1931.

The commemoration began with a tribute to the three and other martyrs of the Indian revolution. The program included two plays, revolutionary songs, speeches and Bhangra.

The first play, Jagiroo Lamber, written by Sadhu, was a monologue that exposes feudal attitudes and male chauvinism towards women. Bhupinder Dhaliwal's excellent portrayal of Jagiroo Lamber kept the audience clapping again and again.

The second play, Shaheed Di Wapsi, was written by Gursharan Singh and deals with the life and struggles of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. It brings out the conditions of oppression during the 1920s in India. The play shows that despite political independence attained in 1947, the Indian people continue to live in oppressive conditions.

The artists who took part in the performance were: Charan Gill, Bhupinder Dhaliwal, Karamjit Ghuman, Darshan Dhillon, Jagdish Judge, Uday Kutona, Bachitar Badhni, Harinder Mahil, Jagdish Binning, Kulu Mahil and Chin Banerjee. There were three actors who did as many as four roles in the play. Given that many of the performers who had acted on the stage for the first time, their performance was excellent. Anand did a great job of make-up. Both plays were directed by Hari Sharma and Raj Chouhan.

The audience admired both plays by clapping again and again. Everyone appeared impressed by the plays' messages.

The Punjab Cultural Association, led by Pal Binning, presented children's Bhangra during the program. Bhangra was accompanied by revolutionary songs by a member of the Bhangra team.

IPANA President Harinder Mahil made a speech paying tribute to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev and other martyrs of the Indian revolution. He exposed the opportunist political leaders that pay tributes to Bhagat Singh while continuing to serve the interests of landlords and capitalists. He expressed shock and dismay at the present situation in Punjab. He attacked the Indian government for the present state of affairs in Punjab. He stated if the government wanted to resolve the issue, it could have done so a long time ago. He also denounced religious extremists and fanatics who are inciting hatred between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab and are responsible for the loss of lives of hundreds of people.

The meeting, attended by some 300 people, passed a resolution denouncing the Indian government, religious fanatics, and communal elements for the present state of affairs in Punjab.

The audience was very enthusiastic about the whole program. Many of those attending congratulated the performers for an excellent performance.



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A Letter of Praise

Dear Friends:

I am sorry that you had to remind me for renewal of subscription. It was an oversight on my part. I deeply appreciate the hard work and dedication which is put in by the volunteers who bring out this newspaper. I also realize that all of you perform a thankless job.

I am aware that people who produce such newspapers (and even those who read them) are often accused by skeptics as those engaging in intellectual haberdashery. I accuse these skeptics of living in an intellectual vacuum. They seem to believe "No news is good news." But the fact is that there are problems and it is important to know them even if it is painful. Your newspaper not only talks about these problems but also mentions the achievements and actions of all those people in India who are doing something to correct them. There may be young people who have dedicated their lives to particularly work with the villagers and help them organize against their oppressors (be it landlords or their thugs or even the police) for a just and equitable society. Or else these people may be organizations such as PUCL or women's groups or judges taking a daring and just stand (in spite of risking annoying the government).

I often feel guilty for having made a decision in favor of a comfortable life by living here in North America. Your newspaper sensitizes me to the real political, economic and social issues in India and informs me about the people who are doing something about it and it is a consolation. In the face of latest developments in news media in India being more and more controlled by the present central government, it is further important to provide a balanced view of both sides. It takes tremendous courage to work against all odds. I believe your work is important and should be encouraged.

Yours Sincerely
Sushil Handa

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Most Immigrants to Canada of Agricultural Background

Women immigrants from India to Canada outnumbered men in 1981, the latest year for which the figures are available. Of 8,256 immigrants, 4147 were women whereas 4109 were men. The largest age group among the newcomers was 20 to 24, and the second largest age group was from 15 to 19. Under occupational groups, farming and agriculture ranked first among Indian immigrants in Canada. Next came scientists, engineers, clerks, managers and administrators.

The province of Ontario has the largest influx of Indian immigrants with a total of 3386; British Columbia was second with 3014. India ranked third as a country among Canada's global immigration population in 1981, with a 6.4% out of total 128,618. Britain was first with 16.5% and US second with 8.2%.

Over 710,000 Indians Living in Britain

According to the Minister of State for External Affairs AA Rahim, the number of people of Indian origin in Britain is over 710,000. According to the minister, over 50% of them hold British passports.

Paradip Carnage during Dock Workers' Strike

By a Correspondent

Orissa politics is surcharged with tension over the massive police excesses in Paradip port township resulting in the death of scores of workers following the death of 4 policemen on March 19. The clash occurred as a sequel to inter-union rivalry.

Biju Patnaik, a former Chief Minister of the state, has put the death toll at 1200. Press reports put it at 7. At a press conference held in the Assembly lobby on March 20, some opposition members—including the Janata leader, Dr. Damodar Raut, the independent MLA, M.s. Nandini Satpathy (a former Chief Minister) and MLAs like Ashok Das, Bijay Mahapatra, and Balagopal Misra—said that the death toll exceeded 100 and about the same number of persons were arrested by the police.

Eyewitness accounts suggest that the dead bodies were recovered from canals and forests, from inside the burnt hutments of workers and some of the bodies were picked up by the relatives of the deceased from the roadside. The widow of a rickshaw-puller, Sujan Maiti, told this correspondent that the police had killed her husband in her very presence on the plea that he had carried some injured workers to the hospital. The Chief Minister, JB Patnaik, however said that Sujan Maiti was traced in a village in the Erasam region. A correspondent of Neelachala, a Calcutta-based Oriya weekly, quotes the opposition members who visited the place on the day following the massacre as saying that 32 workers were mercilessly beaten up by the police and then thrown into the sea. The whereabouts are still unknown. Both the rival factions of the INTUC-affiliated Paradip Dock Mazdoor Union claim that about 500 workers were killed by the policemen who went on the rampage and set fire to the hutments and shops of the locality after sprinkling kerosene and petrol on them. May be the death toll released by politicians is exaggerated. Still it remains a fact that the extensive damage to life and property was caused by the police. According to a report in the Cuttack-based Oriya daily, Samaj (March 23), 2,478 workers have been rendered homeless and property worth Rs 1.2 million destroyed.

Government relief materials started flowing into the affected areas since March 22. But till the week end of March when this correspondent visited the scene, only a meager relief of 2 kg of rice and one piece of cloth per head have not been able to touch even the fringe of the problem. A reign of terror prevails in the township and the adjoining areas. Workers are still afraid of coming out of their shelter, far from moving about freely, apprehending further arrests and repression. According to the Opposition leaders who visited the township, 17 persons with bullet wounds, are under treatment in the Government and port hospitals, a figure corroborated by the statement made by the hospital doctors.

Preliminary inquiry suggests that Pandava Swain and Bhimsen Jena were leaders of the rival factions of the Dock Mazdoor Union. On March 14, Jena lodged a diary with the police that his life was in danger. Accordingly, police bandobast was made to prevent any major flareup during the all-India port workers' strike only two days away. Swain had launched a wildcat strike of workers on March 9 presumably to consolidate his base-level support. Meanwhile a new organization of the stevedores was set up overnight by Jena. This new organization known as the "forwarding and clearing workers' pool" decided to carry on loading and unloading of the cargo. Alarmed at this development, Swain decided to prevent the "workers' pool" from carrying their work. On the day of the incident, about 1000 workers loyal to Swain faction gathered with weapons and clashed with the workers of the Jena faction. Jena died in the clash. The police failed at the beginning to bring the situation under control. But as 4 of their colleagues died in the mob violence, they went berserk and started firing at random. In fact, Visvaranjan Das, commandant of state armed police, according to Biju Patnaik, sent additional reinforcement with a view of creating terror around Paradip. Surprisingly the Chief Minister said in the assembly that the reactions of the policemen to the incident of murder of their colleagues were more than normal.

(continued on page 10)

Big Fish Untouched In Bombay Land Scandal

Shantaram Gholap, Maharashtra Revenue Minister, announced in the State Legislative Council in the third week of March that 11 persons, including employees of the Bombay collectorate, were being charged with falsification of land records leading to excess floor space index (FSI).

He also disclosed that a superintendent in the collectorate, P.D. Haval had been found with cash and valuables worth Rs 36 lakhs and that cases have been filed against three builders.

This announcement followed revelations in the Indian Express of a massive land scandal in Bombay, whereby records had been tampered with to benefit some builders to the tune of hundreds of millions of rupees.

According to a follow-up article in the Indian Express, further investigations show that contrary to what Gholap indicated, the really big fish in the racket have not been touched. Also, senior officials in the government, including Police Commissioner Julio Riberio and Home Secretary B.K. Chougale among others, have been dragging their feet despite clear documentary evidence showing outright forgery.

Arun Bhatia, Collector of Bombay, re-measured the plots of land mentioned in the original newspaper report and confirmed that in nine of the twelve cases manipulation had taken place; he was making further inquiries in the remaining three.

But when he told the police of these facts, they refused to register a First In-

formation Report, under Commission Ribeiro's instructions.

The Indian Express points out that five of the nine plots of land whose falsification Bhatia's remeasurements confirmed are connected to one man: Yusuf Patel, an extremely wealthy builder with connections. The land is situated in Tardeo and Byculla; the extra illegal increase in area that he got is over 100,000 sq ft. At a selling rate of Rs 1,500 per sq ft of built-up area, Patel stands to make over Rs 150 million from the manipulated records.

In contrast, the cases announced by the Minister in the Legislative Council add up to 2,700 sq ft. The Express also points out that when the falsified land plans connected to Yusuf Patel were cleared, the Municipal Commissioner was Chougale, now Home Secretary, which may explain the police's lack of interest in the cases.

Also, the architect in all of Patel's cases is B.K. Gupta, who also figures in a case relating to some land claimed by the Vandana Trust. The trust made a claim on some 300 sq meters of foreshore land in Malabar Hills on the basis of old possession, which the state government approved in early 1983. However, the then Collector of Bombay challenged the government action, pointing out that the area in question was "not at all a land" but formed "part of the sea itself," over which no possession could obviously have been exercised by the trust. But a few months later, the state government turned down the Collector's objections.

ADMK and Congress(I) in Electoral Alliance

The Anna DMK headed by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MG Ramachandran and Indira Congress are going for an electoral alliance to contest the four by-elections to the state assembly. Congress(I) earlier had an alliance with DMK headed by Karunanidhi. But DMK and Congress(I) broke their alliance last summer following which DMK ministry in Pondicherry fell. By-elections for the Tamil Nadu state assembly are scheduled for May 20.

Emissaries of Congress(I) High Command visited Madras few days ago and met with state leaders of Congress(I) and ADMK leaders including Chief Minister MG Ramachandran.

Congress(I)'s position in Rajya Sabha Improved

Indira Congress improved its strength in Rajya Sabha following the recent elections for 1/3 of the seats. However, it narrowly missed the two-thirds majority which would have allowed to amend the constitution. Congress won 47 out of 72 seats and finished with 152 seats out of 244.

Repeated Protests by Bangladesh on Border Fence

Bangladesh government has described Indian government's decision to erect a barbed wire fence along their border as a deliberately provocative act that might endanger peace and tranquility in the border. India's Acting High Commissioner was summoned to the Bangladesh foreign ministry for a third time on April 5 to receive another protest note which urged the Indian government not to erect the fence. The note also said that Bangladesh considered the erection of fence "a blatant disregard of the universally accepted international norm that no structure can be erected unilaterally on the zero line of any border."

According to the Bangladesh government sources, the fence was already being erected on its northern border. But India's Home Minister PC Sethi said that the fence would start only after a survey of two 63-mile stretches of the border are completed.

Faces of India



courtesy Indian Express

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